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- above all on Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus and Proclus.

'The Querist' and the Social State of Ireland (1735-37).—Berkeley's temper was too human and philanthropic for indulgence in merely contemplative thought. He was once more in his native country after a long absence. Ireland took the place of America. Industrious self-reliance was lacking among Irishmen, and his own favourite motto was '*non sibi sed toti.*' The crisis was the occasion of what some may consider the most useful of his books. It took the form of questions, five hundred and ninety-five in number. The first instalment of *The Querist* appeared in 1735, and the last in 1737. The sympathy of the Protestant bishop was not confined to the English colony of Protestants. It included all classes of his countrymen. He asked 'whether a scheme for the welfare of Ireland should not take in the whole inhabitants'; and 'whether it was not "a vain" attempt to project the flourishing of our Protestant gentry exclusive of the bulk of the natives.' He engaged the co-operation of the Roman communion by a letter to their clergy, asking for their help in trying to induce Irishmen to be industrious.

'Siris' and the Medical Virtues of Tar-water.

PHILOSOPHIES ANCIENT AND MODERN

(1) BERKELEY AND SPIRITUAL REALISM

(2) *Hobbes* & (3) *Locke*

NOTE

As a consequence of the success of the series of *Religions Ancient and Modern*, Messrs. CONSTABLE have decided to issue a set of similar primers, with brief introductions, lists of dates, and selected authorities, presenting to the wider public the salient features of the *Philosophies* of Greece and Rome and of the Middle Ages, as well as of modern Europe. They will appear in the same handy Shilling volumes, with neat cloth bindings and paper envelopes, which have proved so attractive in the case of the *Religions*. The writing in each case will be confided to an eminent authority, and one who has already proved himself capable of scholarly yet popular exposition within a small compass.

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Berkeley. By Professor CAMPBELL FRASER, D.C.L., LL.D.

Bakken. By Father TINKELL.

BERKELEY AND SPIRITUAL REALISM

By

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FOREWORD

Spinoza and Berkeley: a coincidence.—Among modern philosophers Spinoza and Berkeley rank together in the manner of their reception. For more than a century after they died both were misinterpreted or neglected. Within the last century each in his way has become an influential factor in the excitement and formation of philosophical thought.

Both tardily recognised.—Spinoza died in 1677, and for more than a hundred years after was vaguely regarded as an impious atheist, under the ban of civil and ecclesiastical authority. Berkeley died in 1753, and for a century was ridiculed as an eccentric visionary, who denied the reality of the earth on which he trod, and of the human beings by whom he was surrounded.

Each now an influential philosophical factor.
—To-day the contemplative reverence of Spinoza's temper is freely acknowledged, and his works are accepted as classics in the philosophical litera-

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ture of Europe, the productions of one who devoted his short life to reasoned meditation about God, or the Universe which he identified with God. And the philosophy of Berkeley is now interpreted as a serious endeavour to vindicate the ultimate spirituality of the universe, and the moral or supernatural agency constantly at work in nature. Within the last forty years (in 1871 and 1901) two large editions of his Collected Works have issued from the Oxford Clarendon Press, besides about ten thousand copies of annotated 'Selections from Berkeley,' much used as a text-book in the colleges and universities of Britain and America. Within the same period, too, Berkeley has been the subject of numerous criticisms in the periodical literature of France, Italy, Germany, and America, as well as in this country.

Questions common to both, but differently answered by each.—Spinoza and Berkeley had this in common, that they found their supreme interest in the final problem of the universe into which we are all ushered as strangers at birth, and in which we now find ourselves transitory visitors, trying to forecast our final destiny. Is Matter or Mind, Body or Spirit, or Something that transcends both, the root of all? Is the

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Reality with which we have constantly to do blind, uninterpretable, meaningless; or is it the revelation of perfect reason and goodness? Is the world, underneath its continuous transformations, a settled Cosmos, and thus trustworthy and interpretable; or is it ultimately a Chaos, which for a time takes the appearance of Cosmos, but which may become a chaotic enigma, unfit to yield science, or to enable us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life? Must I regard myself as a transitory bubble on the endless stream, or as destined for continuous personal or morally responsible life, after this embodied self loses its present embodiment in death? Is Pessimism or Optimism the final goal of the evolution in which I find my embodied self involved?

To which this Age is more alive than any preceding one.—These are questions to which this age has become more awake than any preceding one; which may account for its being attracted, at opposite poles, by the Pantheistic reasonings of Spinoza and the Spiritual Realism of Berkeley. Spinoza in his final Unity finds God in the evil as well as in the good, in the lives of Caligula and Borgia as much as in the lives of the wisest or holiest of mankind.

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Berkeley, on the other hand, less adventurous intellectually, accepts in faith the fact of man's independent power to make himself wicked, and thus refers to the man himself, apart from God, the evil acts of which man accordingly is the creator.

Can they be disposed of in science of nature alone?—Is a final settlement of these questions to be looked for in a scientific study of nature and so-called natural causes? Can they be disposed of (positively or negatively) by observation and physical induction? or is spiritual insight, under necessary presuppositions of reason, required? In short, is the true philosophy Materialism or Spiritual Realism?

Materialism and Spiritual Realism.—Berkeley's Realism belongs to one of the two forms, which philosophy has been apt to assume from the beginning;—the shallower, which stops short amidst the visible and tangible phenomena of the material world and their laws; and the deeper, which is dissatisfied till it reaches the spiritual world, on which physical phenomena depend, and from which they derive their scientific significance. He thus contrasts them:—
'There are two sorts of philosophers. The one placed Body first in the order of things, and

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made the faculty of thinking depend thereupon; supposing that the principles of all things are corporeal; that Body most really or principally exists, and all other things in a secondary sense and by virtue of that. Others, making all corporeal things to be dependent upon Soul or Mind, think this to exist in the first place and primary sense, and the being of bodies to be altogether derived from, and presuppose that of Spirit or Mind.¹

The Sequel.—The ground in reason, and the moral implicates of the second of those philosophies are presented for critical consideration in the following chapters; but perhaps this was a presumptuous undertaking for one in his ninetyeth year.

¹ *Siris*, sec. 263.

October 1908.

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BERKELEY AND SPIRITUAL REALISM

CHAPTER I

BERKELEY

Berkeley's Place in the Modern Philosophical Movement.—John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume were in their times the leading representatives of European philosophy. England was represented by the cautious and sagacious Locke, watchful of the limits of human knowledge; Ireland by Berkeley, the subtle spiritual realist, with his finally moral and religious conception of the universe; and Scotland by Hume, the agnostic critic of the supernatural. Locke's *Essay* or book of ideas belongs to the seventeenth century; the earlier part of the eighteenth was illuminated by Berkeley; and its later years were stimulated intellectually by Hume. Prior to his memorable trio, the philosophic centre had

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been in France, under Descartes and Malebranche, and with Spinoza in Holland; after Hume, but by reaction, the centre shifted from Britain to Germany under Kant and Hegel, and Lotze, the successors of Leibniz.

Berkeley's Personality.—In personal charm, spiritual fervour, benevolent activity, pleasing imagination, and graceful literary expression, all combined, Berkeley is a prince among philosophers and philanthropists. His subtle thought evoked the sceptical intelligence of Hume, and his ardent human interest made the social economy of Ireland, and the Christian civilisation of the world beyond the Atlantic inspiring ideals in his life.

Kilkenny and Trinity College, Dublin.—The record of his opening years is scanty. We know that he was born in the county of Kilkenny in 1685, and that he was trained in the local academy at Kilkenny. At the age of fifteen he entered Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated in 1704, the year in which Locke died. Three years later he was admitted to a Fellowship with high distinction in Mathematics and Philosophy, and afterwards took orders in the Irish Church.

Inspired by a new Far-reaching Thought.—When hardly twenty, a new and far-reaching

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thought about the material world, and what its reality means, had somehow taken possession of him. His 'Commonplace Book,' first published in my *Life and Letters of Berkeley* in 1871, is a striking revelation of his singular state of mind, between the age of nineteen and twenty-four—fervid hostility to empty abstractions, about which philosophers were apt to busy themselves, and reaction in favour of concrete realities and living experience. Through its pages he is under the inspiration of this far-reaching thought, anon calling forth flashes of philosophical enthusiasm. It is constantly referred to by Berkeley as the way of escape from sceptical despair, and as what, notwithstanding the misunderstanding and opposition it was sure to encounter, he was resolved to press upon the world with all convenient speed.

This Thought pervades the 'Commonplace Book' of his Youth.—Here are a few sentences, like many others in the 'Commonplace Book': 'The reverse of the Principle I take to have been the chief source of all that scepticism and folly, all those contradictory and inexplicable puzzling absurdities that have in all ages been a reproach to human reason. I know there is a mighty sect of men who will oppose me. I am young, I

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am an upstart, I am vain. Very well, I will patiently bear up under the most lessening, vilifying appellations the pride and rage of man can devise. One thing I am not guilty of. I do not pin my faith on the sleeve of any great man. . . . 'Tis on the discovery of the nature and meaning of Existence that I chiefly insist. This puts the wide difference between the sceptics and me. This I think wholly new. I am sure it is new in me. . . . I take not away Substances. I only reject the philosophic sense, which is in effect nonsense, of the word Substance. Ask a man not tainted with philosophic jargon, what he means by *Corporeal Substance*. He shall answer, bulk, solidity, and such like sensible qualities. *These I retain*. The *philosophic Substance*, of which I have no idea, I discard; if a man may be said to discard that which never had any being, was never so much as imagined. . . . I know not what they mean by "things considered in themselves." This is nonsense, jargon. . . . *Thing* and *idea* are much words of the same extent and meaning. By *idea* I mean any sensible or imaginable thing. . . . Real existence is not conceivable without perception and volition. Existence is *perceiving* and *willing*, or *being perceived* and *willed*. . . . I am the farthest,

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from scepticism of any man. I know with an intuitive knowledge the existence of other things as well as my own soul. The chief thing I pretend to do is only to remove the mist or veil of words.'¹ In short, if men would lay aside abstract words and betake themselves to real ideas, they could not err, unless by misinterpreting the real ideas actually present to their senses.

Presented to the World in 'Essay on Vision,' 'Principles,' and 'Dialogues' (1709-13).—Berkeley hastened to give the world the pregnant thought which thus early inspired him. He restrained himself, however, so far as to propose it at first only in one of its applications. The eye, the hand, and the organs of locomotion are our chief media of intercourse with the material world outside our own bodies. That we cannot see anything not in contact with the organ of seeing, and that all at any distance from the eye is not actually seen, but only signified by what is seen, is the governing thought of his *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, in which he made his first appearance as a philosopher in 1709. This explanation of seeing was followed in 1710 by the *Principles of*

¹ See *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 30-33.

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Human Knowledge, in which the chief causes of error and difficulty in the sciences and the grounds of scepticism are inquired into, not as in the eye alone, but in all the five senses. The whole material world is presented as a system of mind-dependent sensible signs, in a measure interpretable by man, and which men are more or less able to turn to their own uses. The Spiritual Realism, argued for in the *Principles*, was presented anew in 1713 in *Three Dialogues*, which revive Plato and Cicero in modern philosophy. They recommend the new conception of the reality of the material world to readers who might be repelled by its less lively presentation in the *Principles*. These three books are the unprecedented achievement of a youth between his twenty-fourth and his twenty-eighth year.

Leaves Trinity College to see the World.—The continuous philosophical strain at Trinity College made relaxation and change of scene needful. The retired thinker was now to mix with the world. Soon after the appearance of the *Dialogues*, a Queen's Letter to the Provost of Trinity tells how 'humble suit having been made on behalf of our trusty and well-beloved George Berkeley, one of the Junior Fellows of that our College, that we would give him leave

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to travel and remain abroad during the space of two years, for the recovery of his health and his improvement in learning, we have thought fit to dispense with the articles of residence on his behalf. The two years' leave of absence was in the end extended to seven, and for twenty years after the date of the Queen's Letter, Berkeley's visits to Ireland were infrequent. His middle life was devoted to philanthropic enterprise more than to philosophical ideas.

In London and Italy (1713-20).—Berkeley's first social experience away from Dublin was among the brilliant circles in London that made the reign of Anne illustrious in the history of English literature. Introduced by Swift to Addison and Steele and Pope, the youthful author of the *Dialogues* was a favourite in London coffee-houses and saloons in 1713. In the following year he found his way to Italy, where he lingered for some years, amidst scenes congenial to one attracted to art by the associations of history, and already enriched by ancient learning. A record of his movements during some of those years is contained in the 'Journal of a Tour in Italy,' first published in the *Life and Letters of Berkeley*.

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Publication of 'De Motu.'—He returned to Ireland in 1721. During this prolonged absence the 'New Principle' was not forgotten. One of his resting-places on his way home was at Lyons. There he prepared a Latin Essay on Causation, entitled *De Motu*, which was published soon after he reached London. It insists that spiritual agency, human and divine, is the only efficient and final cause of motion in the material world. This is an application to the phenomena of motion of the thought that inspired Berkeley when he was hardly twenty.

A Philanthropic Project.—Soon after his return to Ireland we find him somehow possessed by the philanthropic inspiration which shaped his life during the next ten years. The philosopher became the philanthropic missionary of Christian civilisation in America, ready to sacrifice for this ideal the social attractions of the Old World in which he had grown into middle life. His official connection with Trinity College ended in 1724, when he was made Dean of Derry, one of the most valuable appointments in the Irish Church. But the American project carried him in the same year to London, ready to resign the Deanery in its behalf. It had been much in his mind for

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three years.¹ Dean Swift thus described the case in a letter to Lord Carteret, then the Irish Lord Lieutenant:—‘There is a gentleman of this kingdom just gone for England. It is Dr. George Berkeley, Dean of Derry. He was a Fellow of the University here; and going to England very young, about thirteen years ago, he became the founder of a sect called the Immaterialists, by the force of a very curious book upon that subject. I am now to mention his errand. He is an absolute philosopher with regard to money, titles, and power; and for three years past has been struck with a notion of founding a university at Bermudas, by a charter from the Crown. He showed me a little tract which he designs to publish; and there your Excellency will see his whole scheme of a life academico-philosophical, of a College for Indian scholars and missionaries; where he most exorbitantly proposes a whole hundred pounds a year for himself. His heart will break if his Deanery be not taken from him. I discouraged him by the coldness of courts and ministers; but nothing will do. And therefore I humbly entreat your Excellency either to use such persuasions as will keep one of the first men in the kingdom for

¹ In 1726 he published a ‘Proposal’ to erect a College in the Isles of Bermuda, ‘for converting the savage Americans to Christianity.’

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learning and virtue, quiet at home, or assist him by your credit to compass his romantic design; which, however, is very noble and generous.'¹

A College at Bermuda.—After years of anxious negotiation in London, where he experienced 'the coldness of courts and ministers,' of which Swift had warned him, Berkeley, with his newly-married wife, sailed on his way to Bermuda, in the faith of a supposed promise by Sir Robert Walpole of a charter, and financial help for the proposed college there, which was to be a fountain of Christian civilisation for the vast Indian population of North America.

Berkeley in Rhode Island.—He halted on his way for two years in Rhode Island, waiting there in vain for the charter and the grant; but he never saw Bermuda. He had been deluded by the fair words of the minister. Yet he was not idle in Rhode Island. He bought a little farm and built a house in a pleasant valley in the interior of the island, and there resumed the studies of his early years.

American Samuel Johnson.—Congenial society was not wanting. Soon after his arrival he was visited by the Reverend Samuel Johnson, distinguished along with Jonathan Edwards as one

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 102-3.

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Of the two representatives of early American philosophy. Berkeley's letters to Johnson¹ are explanations of disputed points in his spiritual realism, to which Johnson was converted, and afterwards defended in his own works, in a manner that entitles him to an eminent place among American thinkers.

Fruits of Study in Rhode Island: 'Alciphron' and 'Theory of Visual Language' (1732-3).—Some fruits of Berkeley's studies in the secluded American valley were given to the world in 1732, immediately after his return to England. *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*, made its appearance in March of that year. In the form of Dialogues he criticised the prevailing materialism, and presented his spiritual philosophy in aspects fitted to restore faith in the omnipresence of Omnipotent Spirit, in the moral order of the universe, and in the Christian revelation of God. Of the seven Dialogues, the fourth and the last are probably the most interesting. The former expands the visual symbolism of Berkeley's juvenile Essay on Seeing into a universal sense symbolism, which recognises in the ordered sequences of the material world the language of the Omnipotent Spirit in whom we live and

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 175-81.

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have our being. A hostile critic moved Berkeley to reply. *The Theory of Visual Language, showing the immediate Presence and Providence of a Deity, Vindicated and Explained*, appeared early in 1733, in answer to strictures on the Fourth Dialogue in *Alciphron*.

Bishop of Cloyne.—Berkeley's wanderings in Europe and America during middle life were now ended. Two years after the return from a mission in which he had embarked with so much enthusiasm, he was made Bishop of Cloyne, through the influence, as it seems, of the philosophic Queen Caroline, and perhaps with some regard to what was due on account of the disillusion of the American vision. This remote diocese in the south of Ireland was his home for twenty years. His cherished hopes had faded. The ideal of America in the future, civilised and Christianised, was dissolved. In his remaining years signs of chastened enthusiasm and failing health abound. Still he resumed at Cloyne the work which cheered the recluse life at Rhode Island and inspired him in far-off years at Trinity College; now in a more meditative temper, less controversial, more disposed to lean for support upon illustrious philosophers of the ancient world,

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—Some of his early years at Cloyne were years of famine and disease. This reminded him of American experience of the virtues of tar-water. He became the ardent apostle of this medicine, and connected it by curious links with his spiritual idealism. Contemplating the beneficence of tar-water, he was led by subtle associations to the constitution of the whole material world of which tar was a part; and thence to the efficient and final cause of a universe in which everything is connected with everything else, through the Omnipotent Spirit in Whom the Whole has its being. Although such 'phantoms' as 'corporeal forces' pass in the natural sciences as true causes, and are supposed by some to explain everything, yet in truth they explain nothing, for all true explanation lies deeper. It is found in Spirit or Mind, not in impotent corporeal things; while all corporeal things depend on Spirit; this containing, connecting, enlivening the entire material frame, so that those things which before seemed to constitute the whole of existence, prove to be but fleeting phantoms. Such is the spirit of *Siris*, Berkeley's last addition to the literature of philosophy, described as 'a chain of philosophical reflections and inquiries concerning the virtues of tar-water, and divers other subjects'

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connected together and arising out of one another.' It was his legacy to the world in 1744.

Old Age and Death in Oxford.—A period of declining health followed. 'I submit to years and infirmity,' he writes to Dean Gervais in 1752. 'My views in this world are mean and narrow; it is a thing in which I have small share, and which ought to give me small concern. The evening of life I choose to pass in a quiet retreat. Ambitious projects, intrigues and quarrels of statesmen, are things I have formerly been amused with, but now they seem to be a vain fugitive dream.' He had long been possessed by a romantic desire to end his days in Oxford. The time was now come. In the summer of 1752 he found his home in the historic city of colleges. He was not permitted to enjoy it long. On a Sunday in January 1753, surrounded by his family, he was suddenly overtaken by the mystery of death, and the material world, about which he had speculated so long, ceased to be his medium of intercourse with his fellow-men.

Berkeley's Modest Estimate of his own Philosophy.—In the seven philosophical tractates already mentioned—three issued in sanguine impetuous youth, three others in active middle

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life, and the last in contemplative old age — Berkeley has unfolded and applied the Spiritual Realism of which he is an illustrious modern representative. He recognised how apt his conception of the material world is to be misinterpreted, and he renounced all claim to a fully elaborated philosophy. 'I do not indeed wonder,' he tells his American friend Johnson, 'that on first reading what I have written, men are not thoroughly convinced. On the contrary, I should very much wonder if prejudices, which have been many years taking root, should be extirpated in a few hours' reading. I had no intention to trouble the world with large volumes. What I have done was rather with a view of giving hints to thinking men, who had leisure and curiosity to go to the bottom of things, and pursue them in their own minds.' ¹

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, p. 181. See also Berkeley's correspondence with Sir John Percival, in Chapter v. of the *Berkeley*, in Blackwood's *Philosophical Classics*.

CHAPTER II

THE MATERIAL WORLD AND ITS NATURAL ORDER

The Material World is Real in and through Percipient Mind. Its *esse* is *percipi*.—We put ourselves at Berkeley's point of view when we try in vain to conceive the material universe and its ambient space existing in all their present reality, yet unfelt, unperceived, unrealised in *any* intelligence, finite or divine, a dead universe, living mind in every form non-existent. Try to suppose this wholly abstracted material world as the sum total of reality. Is the conception possible? Is it not repugnant to reason? Must not a dead material universe, abstracted from all activities of living spirit, human or other, be wholly destitute of qualities? What can be meant by an unseen colour, or an unheard sound, or untouched, unresisted hardness? Is not human perception of *these* the deepest and truest conception we can form of what their existence or reality means? May we

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not even say that the material world exists only in order that it may be perceived, so that its changes may thus be signs to each of us of the reality of other bodies, and spirits,—a world external to ourselves? When I try honestly to make this experiment of abstracting matter from all living spirit, I find, Berkeley would say, that the material world inevitably loses reality and becomes an unthinkable abstraction, which we may call ‘matter’ or ‘corporeal substance,’ using words, nevertheless, that have no meaning. Must not *percipi*, in short, be the *esse* of the things of sense?

That Perception is needed to make the Material World Real is Self-evident.—By Berkeley, in his youthful ardour, no proof or argument was required to sustain this proposition; to him the constant dependence of the material world upon the activities of living spirit seemed self-evident. It was but looking into one’s own thoughts and trying whether one could conceive as possible, or in no way repugnant to reason, a figure or a motion, or a sound, or a colour, existing as an unperceived reality. If any one *could* do this, he was ready to abandon his favourite principle of the absolute dependence of the data of the senses for their reality upon living,

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• Mind or Spirit. It could not be. 'Some truths then are so near and obvious,' he exclaims, 'that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth, in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any substance without a mind; that *their being* is to be perceived or known; and that so long as they are not perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind, or in that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some Eternal Spirit; it being perfectly unintelligible, and involving all the absurdity of abstraction, to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of Spirit. To be convinced of which one has only to try to separate the *being* of a sensible thing from its *being perceived*.'¹ In short, if there was no living spirit in existence to maintain the reality of the things of sense, the material world could have no reality. This alleged self-evident truth is above all what the student of Berkeley has to ponder and test, by prolonged and varied mental experiments of his own.


• ¹ *Principles of Human Knowledge*, sec. 6. See also the first of the *Three Dialogues*.

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An Objection answered.—It is not obvious at first, or indeed at last, to the unreflecting. They are ready to say that nothing is easier than to suppose books existing on a table, or trees existing in a park, or the stars existing in the ambient space, and no one all the time perceiving or thinking about them. Quite true, Berkeley would reply; but, in that case, the necessary conditions of the experiment have not been complied with. *The living mind of the objector himself* has not been withdrawn, and so the abstraction of spirit has not been complete. ‘What,’ he asks, ‘is all this, I beseech you, more than framing in your own mind ideas of books, trees, and stars, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of any one that may perceive them?’ So that is nothing to the purpose. It only shows that the objector is able to perceive and imagine; not that things can have intelligible reality without a living perception of them. It shows that a man forgetting to take notice of *himself* has been in consequence deluded into supposing that he has found bodies existing wholly divorced from realising spirit; although all the while they were being realised in the objector’s own experience.

The Material World consists of Sense-pre-

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Presented Appearances.—Accordingly the material world consists wholly of what we may call sense-presented phenomena or appearances, sensible qualities, *ideas* of sense as Berkeley calls them, on account of their dependence on being perceived. Colours are presented when we see, motions and resistances when we touch or move, and sounds in their varieties when we hear. 

The Individual 'Things' of Sense are Bundles of Appearances.—The appearances presented to our senses do not come and go as isolated units. They appear blended together in separate bundles. Being found to cohere, the resembling bundles 'come to be marked by one name, and to be reputed one thing.' Thus a certain colour, taste, smell, figure, and consistence, having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*. Other collections constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things; which, as they are pleasing or disagreeable, excite in us the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth.

 **What Material 'Substances' and 'Causes' mean according to Spiritual Realism.**—The different bundles of sensible qualities, or, as Berkeley calls them, 'collections of the real ideas that are presented to the senses,' are all

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that he meant by 'material substances.' A substance is nothing more than an isolated aggregate of qualities, somehow held together, and subject to continuous orderly changes of appearance. The united qualities undergo transformations in an order commonly called the order of nature. The steadiness of the order in which their transformations proceed enables us, after sufficient observation of their habits, to predict coming forms that they must assume, so that present phenomena become *signs* of absent phenomena with which they are connected under natural law; thus 'giving us a sort of foresight, which enables us to regulate our conduct in the material world for the benefit of life, and without which we should be eternally at a loss.'¹ And as 'substances,' in the material world, are only bundles of qualities, so 'causes,' in the material world, are only natural *signs* of coming changes. My habitual observation of apples enables me to foresee the taste of an apple before I eat it. Experience of the motions of heavenly bodies, those huge material substances, enables science to forecast the times of sunrise and sunset centuries in advance. But we know no more about material substance than that it is a bundle of sense-

¹ See *Principles*, sec. 31.

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presented qualities, and no more about their material causes than that the transformations in nature occur in a constant reliable order. What Power keeps the appearances united in bundles, or why the transformations which the bundles undergo are orderly and not chaotic, our senses do not tell us. 'That food nourishes, sleep refreshes, and fire warms us; that to sow in the seed-time is the way to reap in the harvest, and in general that to obtain such and such ends, such and such means are conducive—all this we know, not by discovering any necessary connection between our ideas and sense, but only by the observation of the settled laws of nature, without which we should be all in uncertainty and confusion, and a grown man no more know how to manage himself in the affairs of life than an infant just born.'¹

Natural Co-existences and Natural Sequences.

—In short, we find that the phenomena of which the material world consists *coexist* in separate so-called 'substances,' and that they follow one another in a steady and therefore calculable *succession*, called 'causal' order. But all we are entitled to mean by material substance is this coexistence of qualities; and all we are entitled

¹ *Principles*, sec. 31.


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to mean by material causation is this orderly, calculable succession of facts, which all depend for their reality on being perceived.

Percipient Spirits and Self-consciousness.—But this is not the whole or the chief part. Objects in the material world depend for their real existence on being perceived. Is there nothing to tell about the *percipients* as well as the perceived? The inconsiderate are apt to forget this question, because percipient spirits are not visible objects of sense, with which all are familiar; and yet percipient spirits are at the root of all things. So besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, aggregated in their (so-called) substances, and naturally ordered according to their (so-called) natural causes—besides these, Berkeley finds a ‘*something*’ which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering, about them. ‘This perceiving active being is what I call Mind, Spirit, Soul, or Myself. By which words I do not denote any one of my ideas, but a thing entirely distinct from them, wherein they exist; or, which is the same thing, whereby they are perceived.’¹ Thus the universe in which I am living con-

¹ *Principles*, sec. 2.

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ists of bundles of sensible appearances, constantly undergoing transformations, in an orderly calculable manner, all dependent on Spirit or Mind. 

Signified by the Personal Pronouns. — But what of this ‘something,’ signified by the personal pronoun ‘I,’—not to speak of ‘you’ or ‘he’? ‘I’ is neither a quality nor a bundle of qualities, like the things of sense; nor can it be an empty abstraction, like the abstract material substance of some philosophers? For ‘I’ continues the same person; but the world of the senses, including my own body, is continually changing. In the whole world of sense-presented appearances, I find nothing corresponding to the ‘self’ that I am obliged to presuppose in all perceptions; and that is in a manner revealed when in memory I recall the past, and recognise that ‘I’ am a person who is still *the same person* as I was years before.

My personal Identity. — I find nothing in the world of the senses corresponding to this cord, as it were, of personal identity. I cannot remember the past without being sure that ‘I’ existed in that past. To suppose that my memory can go back to what happened before I existed would subvert the basis of knowledge. And my present feelings and thoughts are not thus

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identical with past ones. The pain or pleasure of to-day is not identical with the pain or pleasure I felt this day last year, however much it may resemble it. Without this personal identity 'I' could not be responsible for actions. Not so with the things of sense. When I call my body, or any other of the things of sense, 'the same' to-day as it was last year, this is only in a conventional meaning of the term 'same,' for they have undergone much change of their constituent phenomena in the interval; and the phenomena are the whole of them, nothing permanent underlying, as in the unique case of the identity of the 'I.' Moreover, things of sense are only signs of other things of sense, under laws over which the things themselves have no control. Intending personal volitions are absolutely self-caused; so that the self as their originating cause is alone responsible for them. On the other hand, the so-called natural 'causes' within the material world are only signs, connected with preceding signs, in what may be an unbeginning and endless procession. Morally responsible acts of will *must* originate in the persons who are responsible for them, if moral responsibility is real. It cannot be transferred to preceding (so-called) causes in an endless

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progress, as in the sense-symbolism of the natural world.

✓ **The only Real Agent in Existence is Spirit.**

—Spirit in fact is the one finally sustaining and finally active Reality in the universe, so far, at any rate, as the universe has any practical relation to me. The ‘substances’ and ‘causes’ in the material world are all subordinate to spirit. Matter consists of aggregates of appearances presented in the senses. The things of sense *per se* are wholly passive and impotent; persons are the only active originaive powers.¹


Is an Impotent Material World therefore useless?—Does all this imply that the material world is a powerless illusion, and that only spiritual beings are real? Have the appearances of sense no office to discharge in the economy of human life and the universe? Far from it. According to Berkeley, they play indispensable parts in the world-drama. Look at some of these.

The Material World reveals to each Person that he is not the only Person in Existence.—

1. In the first place, it is through the sense-presented signs commonly called ‘matter,’ that I find

¹ *Principles*, sec. 25, where the total impotence of matter is deduced from its dependence on being perceived; also *Siris*, secs. 154, 155, 252-253, etc.

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that I am not alone in the universe, a solitary percipient and voluntary agent. I find *some* presented appearances dependent on my perceptions and obedient to my will; but over the great majority I find that I have no control. Most of them come and go whether I will or not. In particular I perceive motions and other sensible changes which signify to me that spiritual agents, not myself, co-operate in their production. I recognise these appearances as the actions of embodied human spirits, in whose company I thus find myself, by means of this natural language of the senses, supplemented as it is by the various artificial languages of mankind, spoken and written, all due to our senses. 

‘My body’ and its Office as a Medium.—In particular I find that *my* power over the different bundles of passive phenomena which form the things of sense is immediately confined to the small mass of matter in which I find myself embodied, and which I call *my body*, it being my special portion of the material world. It is by movements of my body or some of its organs that I signify *my* spiritual existence to other persons, and it is through like means that they signify *their* existence to me. None of my senses gives me an immediate perception of things that

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are not in actual contact with my body. We are apt to suppose that we see and hear things and persons that are at a distance from our bodies. It was by disproof of this, in his *New Theory of Vision*, that Berkeley, in 1709, opened the way to a full disclosure of his spiritual realism in the years following. Instead of seeing distant things or distant persons, we can see only *visual signs* of their presence, and of their distance from our bodies, the distance being signified by the amount of locomotive experience we should have to pass through to be in contact with their bodies. For the appearances we see vary in distinctness and otherwise, in proportion as the distant objects are near or far off. Visual and audible signs, especially their own bodily motions, in like manner introduce me to other spirits—other human beings—embodied like myself, and also to the whole world outside my own body. Our opportunities are multiplied indefinitely by the mechanical devices which things of sense supply for increasing this knowledge. Telescopes and microscopes are familiar examples.

The World of Sensible Signs shows above all the Constant Activity of pervading Omnipotent Spirit.—But the sensible signs which show the existence and activity of other human spirits

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like myself are few and far between, among the innumerable changes in the world opened to us through our senses. Though there are some changes in the things of sense, 'which convince us that *human* agents are concerned in producing them, it is nevertheless evident to every one that those things which are called the works of Nature, that is by far the greater part of the changes presented to our senses, are *not* produced by, or dependent on, the wills of men.' 'There is, therefore, some other Spirit that causes them; since it is repugnant to reason that they should subsist by themselves or uncaused. But if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of all sensible things, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid Spirit Who works all in all, and by Whom all things consist.'¹ Thus the universe of sense-signs constantly signifies Omniscient and Omnipotent Spirit, even as their bodily signs reveal to me the thoughts and feelings and intending volitions of my fellow-men.

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✓ **God speaks to all Men through the Data of their Senses as one Man to another through Spoken Words.**—That all sensible signs signify the presence and agency of Omnipotent Spirit, in like


¹ *Principles*, sec. 148.

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manner as some sense-signs signify the presence and agency of a fellow human spirit, does not satisfy the sceptic. Alciphron, in the Fourth Dialogue, asks: 'Do you pretend that you can have the same assurance of the being of God that you can have of mine, whom you actually see stand before you and talk to you?' 'The very same, if not greater,' Euphranor replies. 'For by the person Alciphron is meant an individual thinking thing or spirit, and not the hair, skin, and visible surface, or any part of the outward shape, form, and colour of Alciphron. And in granting this (as you have done), you grant that, in strict sense, I do not see Alciphron, that is, that individual thing or Spirit, but only such visible signs as infer the being of that invisible thinking Soul. Even so it seems to me that though I cannot with eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense perceive, by all my senses, such signs, such effects, as demonstrate the invisible God, with the same evidence at least as other signs perceived by sense suggest the existence of *your* Soul or Spirit, of which I am convinced by only a few sensible signs; whereas I do at all times and in all places perceive sensible signs of the being of God.' 'But it is *my* hearing you talk,' Alciphron rejoins, 'that is in strict philosophical truth the best

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argument for *your* being. And this is inapplicable to your purpose; for you will not, I suppose, pretend that God speaks to men through their senses as one man doth to another? 'But what if it shall appear,' replies Euphranor, 'that God speaks to men by the intervention of arbitrary, outward, sensible signs, having no resemblance or necessary connection with the things they stand for; if it shall appear that by innumerable combinations of these signs in nature an endless variety of things is discovered to us, and that we are thereby taught and admonished what to shun and what to pursue, and are directed how to regulate our motions, and how to act with regard to things distant from us, will this content you?' Being assured that it would, Euphranor proceeds to fortify his position by illustrations of the sense-symbolism which makes the material world to us as really a language of God as spoken or written words constitute the language of men. 

 **The Material World is charged with Pleasures and Pains, which by Interpretation of its Phenomena we can secure or avoid.—2.** Through my senses I not only find that I am not solitary in the universe, but through my embodiments participate in innumerable pains and pleasures. The

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world of the senses is charged with *signs* of possible bodily pains and bodily pleasures; and it is by interpreting the phenomena presented to our senses that we distinguish health-giving signs from those which forecast bodily injury, so that we are able to avail ourselves of the one sort and to avoid the other. We find that bread will nourish our bodies, and that arsenic will destroy them. My body is a part of the universal system of sensible signs, and it is also, in this life, virtually a part of myself. But neither my body nor any other portion of the material world is supposed by the spiritual realist to be so dependent on *human* spirits as to go in and out of existence as it is perceived or not perceived by them, having thus only an interrupted reality, perceived now by one person and again by another. The things of sense are, on the contrary, always kept in existence in and by the Universal World-Mind that sustains and gives reality to the whole material world. Thus there is an established harmony, which enables the embodied spirit to regulate his actions for the benefit of his life. ~

Beattie's Travesty of Spiritual Realism.— Yet it has been strangely supposed that this spiritual realism requires us to alter our conduct in the affairs of life, and to act as if we were in

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an uninterpretable chaos. Read, for example, what the poet Beattie says about Berkeley in his *Essay on Truth*:—‘If a man believe this strange doctrine of Berkeley as steadily and with as little distrust as I believe the contrary, he will, I am afraid, have but little reason to applaud himself on this new acquisition in science;’ he will soon find that it had been better for him to have reasoned and believed and acted like the rest of the world. If he fall down a precipice, or be trampled under foot by horses, it will avail him little that he once had the honour to be a disciple of Berkeley, and that those dangerous objects are nothing but *ideas* in the mind. And yet if such a man be seen to avoid a precipice, or to get out of the way of a coach and six horses at full speed, he acts as inconsistently with his belief as if he ran away from a *picture* of an angry man, even while he believed it to be only a picture . . . I will not say that this man runs a greater risk of universal scepticism than of universal credulity. Either the one, or the other, or both, must be his portion; and either the one or the other would be sufficient to embitter my whole life, and to disqualify me for every duty of a rational creature. . . . But that I may no longer suppose what I maintain to be impossible, *i.e.* that mankind in

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general, or even ~~one~~ rational being, could, by force of argument, be convinced that this absurd doctrine is true — what if *all* men were in one instant (miraculously) deprived of their understanding by almighty power, and made to believe that matter has no existence but as an idea in the mind, all other things remaining as they are. Doubtless this catastrophe would, according to our metaphysicians, throw a wonderful light upon all parts of knowledge. But of this I am certain, that in less than a month after, there could not, without another miracle, be one human creature alive on the face of the earth.'

Berkeley's use of the term 'Idea' apt to mislead.—For Beattie's travesty of Berkeley's conception of the material world Berkeley is himself responsible so far as, by his application of the term 'idea' to what is actually presented to our senses, he seems to say that the objects present in the senses are only unmeaning fancies, that actual sense is identical with imagined sense. Berkeley himself thus anticipates Beattie's intended *reductio ad absurdum*:—'It will be objected that by the foregoing principles, all that is real and substantial in nature is banished out of ~~the~~ world, and instead thereof a chimerical scheme of ideas takes its place. All things

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that exist, exist only in the mind. What therefore becomes of the sun, moon and stars? What must we think of houses, mountains, rivers, trees, stones, nay even of our own bodies? Are all these but so many chimeras and illusions of the fancy? To all which I answer, that by my principles we are not deprived of any one thing in nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or in any wise understand remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is still a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras remains in full force. This is evident from what I have shown is meant by real things, in opposition to chimeras, or ideas of our own framing.’¹ Yet experience has shown that this application of the word ‘idea,’ alike to realities and to chimeras, is apt to suggest that the so-called ‘real’ is only chimerical. A bundle of signs that is seen or touched ought not to be even verbally identified with an imagined bundle.

The Material Universe exercises the Scientific Understanding.—3. Another function which Berkeley’s material world discharges is that it exercises the understanding in interpreting scientifically the phenomena of which it is composed. These phenomena are interpretable and

¹ *Principles*, sec. 34; also 29, 30, 33.

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calculable, because they are evolved in constant order; as we commonly say, they are under natural laws. Their interpretability is founded on the constancy of the order in which their changes proceed.

Why do we believe that the Universe is a Cosmos?—How do we know that there must be steady order pervading what on the surface often appears chaotic? Berkeley refers the universal belief in the uniformity of nature to observation. ‘Having *always observed* that our perception of a certain round, luminous figure which we call the sun is accompanied by a sensation called heat, we conclude that the sun and heat are constantly connected; so that the appearance of the one is a sign of the appearance of the other, and so the one is called the *cause* of the other.’ But our narrow observation is not enough to explain faith in constant order underlying all natural changes. For ‘observation’ is necessarily confined to the present and the past; I cannot observe the future: indeed I can only observe a small portion of the present and the past. Even if I had reasonable assurance that natural order had been universally maintained hitherto, what guarantee have I for its continuance? Do I know *a priori* enough of the universe in which I

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find myself, to be assured that *it is a universe in, which the *cosmos* of the past may not become *chaos* in the future?* It is not enough to say that uniform order in the past has accustomed us to expect a like uniformity in future; that an irresistible habit of expectation is thus formed, and that we could not live if we were to resist this habit. That is true; but to convert the habit into *reasonable faith* we must *presuppose* that we are living in a reasonably conducted or trustworthy universe. We must receive the data of the senses in reasonable confidence, that the habits which they form are in harmony with actual Reason immanent in things,—that we are living in a natural *cosmos*, not in what may turn out in the end to be *chaos*. But more of this in the sequel.

The Material World is fitted to evoke Philosophic Thought.—4. The material world, under Berkeley's conception of it, is not only fit to exercise the scientific understanding, but the conception itself signally exercises philosophic reason and imagination, and sustains faith in the religious conception of the universe. Berkeley's immaterialism, as Sir James Mackintosh remarks, 'is chiefly valuable 'as a touchstone of metaphysical sagacity, showing those to be altogether


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without it, who, like Johnson and Beattie, believed that his speculations were sceptical, that they implied any distrust of the senses, or that they had the smallest tendency to disturb reason or to alter conduct.' And to think of the material world as itself impotent, and necessarily dependent for its real existence and its natural order upon omniscient and omnipotent World-Mind, is at least a step to a more definite religious conception of the spirituality, intelligibility, and morality that underlies the universe. Virgil and Wordsworth are among many examples of how visible nature touches the imagination of the poet.

Does Berkeley's Conception of the Material World satisfy the Human Mind?—But after all one may ask whether this way of thinking about the ordered world presented to our senses fully satisfies the human mind, as a sufficient expression of our relations to matter and its changes.

'Sameness' versus 'Similarity' in things.—Does the continued existence of things visible and tangible, and their orderly changes, through their dependence on the omnipotence of the Universal World-Mind, adequately express the

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sameness, for example, of this book on my table, as seen and handled by two different persons; or of the table itself on which the book was resting? When a hundred persons are perceiving a tree simultaneously, are there really a hundred trees, all *similar* but not the *same*? Can two persons ever be properly said to perceive the *same* thing, if the appearances presented to each of them are not numerically the same, but only similar? Can what is within my mind be identically, at the same time, within the mind of another? Is the material 'substance,' against which Philonous argues so strenuously in the *Dialogues*, only an empty abstraction? Does the bundle of impotent sense-appearances which, according to Berkeley, alone makes individual material substances,—does *this* exist, when they are unperceived, thus preserving its objective identity when presented to innumerable percipients? 

Berkeley's Answer.—Philonous, who personates Berkeley in the *Dialogues*, seems more embarrassed by this difficulty than by any other, when he tries to vindicate *perceived similarity*, as practically *objective sameness*, in the case of a thing present to the senses of different percipients. Hylas objects that the same *idea* which one man has 'in his mind' cannot be in the mind of another

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man, any more than his consciousness can be the consciousness of another. 'Doth it not therefore follow,' he asks, 'that no two persons can perceive the same thing? and is not this highly absurd?' 'If the term *same* be taken in the vulgar acceptation,' Philonous replies, 'it is certain (and not at all repugnant to the principles I maintain) that different persons may perceive the same thing, or the same thing exist in different minds. Words are of arbitrary imposition, and since we are used to apply the word *same* when no distinction or variety is perceived, and I do not pretend to alter their perceptions, it follows that as men have said before, 'several saw the same thing,' so they may upon the like occasion still continue to use the same phrase, without any deviation either from propriety of language or from the truth of things. But if the term *same* be used in the acceptation of philosophers, who pretend to an abstracted notion of identity, then, according to their sundry definitions of this notion, it may or may not be possible for *divers persons* to perceive the *same thing*. But whether philosophers shall think fit to call a sensible thing the same or no is, I conceive, of small importance. Let us suppose several men together, all affected in *like sort* by their senses, and who had yet never known the use of language,

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they would without question agree in their perceptions. Though perhaps, when they came to the use of speech, some, regarding the uniformness of what was perceived, might call it the *same* thing; others, especially regarding the diversity of persons who perceived, might choose the denomination of *different* things. But who sees not that all the dispute is about a word, *i.e.* whether what is perceived by different persons may yet have the denomination 'same' applied to it? Or suppose a house, whose walls remaining unaltered, the chambers are all pulled down, and new ones built in their place, and that you should call this *the same*, and I should say it was not the same house, would we not for all this perfectly agree in our thought of the house, considered in itself? and would not all the difference consist in a sound? If you should still say, we differed in our notions, for that you superadded to your idea of the house the abstracted idea of identity, whereas I did not; I would tell you, I know not what you mean by the abstracted idea of identity, and should desire you to look into your own thoughts and be sure you understood it yourself.' ¹

Inadequacy of a Conception of the Things of

¹ See Third Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous.

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Sense which excludes 'Sameness.'—Notwithstanding all that Philonous says, this translation of *sameness* into *similarity*, in what are commonly called 'the same things' seems to leave us still dissatisfied. For it offers us as many material worlds as there are percipient spirits in existence; multiplied too by the perceptions of 'the same thing' by the same person at different times. One might say that it also implies as many percipients as there are perceptions, were it not for our consciousness of *personal* sameness, which makes the difference between *individual spirits* and the *collections of impotent phenomena* conventionally called 'material substances.'

Sameness not mere Similarity.—But although nothing corresponding to personal identity in the spiritual world is presupposed in the presented appearances that compose the things of sense, may not the *appearances* that are perceived by me to-day be objectively identical with those perceived by me to-morrow; and may not the *appearances* perceived by a hundred persons at once be not merely similar but objectively identical? 'Similarity' is as much an empty abstraction as 'identity,' if either is so.* The mere fancies that arise in my mind to-day, however similar,

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are not identical with those that arose yesterday; and those that arise in one imagination are not identical with those that arise in the imagination of other persons, however much they may resemble them. Does not the difference between what is presented to us in sense and what rises in imagination appear in this?

A Question proposed.—The question comes to be whether the permanent dependence of the material world on the Omnipotent Spirit is an adequate account of the continued objective existence of sense-presented phenomena. Are human spirits so related, sub-consciously it may be, to the Universal Spirit, as well as to one another, in and through the Universal Spirit, that objects presented to the senses of one man can in this way be *numerically the same* as those presented to different men, or to the same man at different times? This question may be left for the consideration of the reader.

CHAPTER III

EMBODIED SPIRITS AND MORAL ORDER—BIRTH AND DEATH

The Material World becomes real in innumerable Spirits.—In interpreting the sense signs that compose the material world, I find that *I* am not the only human percipient and agent in existence. I find millions of companions, embodied like myself, revealing their spiritual reality and activity to one another, through their bodies and their bodily movements. The material world is realised at this moment in the perceptions of more than a thousand millions of individual human spirits embodied on our planet. To this multiplication of sense-perceptions in the minds of the millions of mankind now living must be added all like experiences in departed generations, as well as in generations yet unborn. Whether the sense-presented appearances of which each person

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is aware are objectively the same, or whether they must in all cases be separate spiritual editions of similar sense-appearances, is, as we have seen, an alternative ambiguously determined by Berkeley. At any rate the world of sensible signs is somehow real in millions of embodied human spirits.

Does the Human Spirit die with the Human Body?—But what of the individual human beings who thus contribute to reality, and help to produce changes, in the evolving world present to their senses? Generations of persons come and depart, ceasing to present visible or other sensible signs of their continued existence. Their bodies are born and die. Is the life of the human spirit contemporaneous with the birth and dissolution of the bodily organism which signifies its existence? Memory, which bears witness to the existence of the identical reminiscent spirit for a few past years, cannot recall an experience preceding the birth of its body; and the now living spirit can of course have had no experience of the consequence of the death of the body. His embodied life lasts, as it were for a moment, between a mysterious unbeginning Past and a mysterious unending Future. Does the spirit live only as long as the organised body lasts?

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Is there a Plurality of Spiritual Worlds?

• — Human spirits are the only ones that come within the range of human experience. Whether others, more or less like them, in other worlds, present there sensible signs of their existence, is an interesting question. The advance of astronomy has vastly enlarged the modern conception of the material world, and made it difficult to suppose that this small and remote planet is the only one, among innumerable stars and planets, that is the abode of embodied spirits. What of the other planets in our own solar system, and what of their central sun? What of the millions of other suns with their attendant planets, still inadequately explored by telescopes, or interpreted in the inferences of science? Is there a plurality of worlds occupied by embodied spirits?

Micromegas the Celestial Traveller. — At any rate we have no sensible signs of their existence, such as we have of our human companions. We cannot, like Micromegas, the supposed inhabitant of one of the planets of the Dog Star, in Voltaire's romance, ask a native of the planet Saturn, how many senses the persons on his globe have. 'We have seventy-two senses,' the Saturnian is made to say, 'and we are every

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day complaining of the smallness of the number. Our imagination goes far beyond our wants.' 'I can very well believe it,' Micromegas replies, 'for on our globe we have very near one thousand senses, and yet with all these we feel a constant inquietude, telling us that there are beings infinitely nearer perfection than ourselves.'

The Qualities of Matter must differ according to the Senses of the Percipients.—But if we cannot directly perceive signs of embodied spirits on neighbouring planets, even such signs as the supposed canals on Mars, there may be more or less probable inferences. Our own planet was long desolate, and may be desolate again. The history of the other heavenly bodies may be similar. And, as the planetary tour of Micromegas suggests, the sense organs of embodied spirits in different regions may vary in innumerable ways, and so the perceived appearances of matter may be different in each from the qualities matter presents to us. Our five senses may all be wanting in other stellar races; their offices being discharged by the seventy-two senses of the Saturnian, or the thousand senses of Micromegas; their respective material worlds consisting in consequence of qualities wholly unimaginable by man. What we call 'matter' would thus present

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qualities on each planet corresponding to the senses and sense experiences of its inhabitants,—all inconceivable to us.

Embodied Spirits in relation to Space and Time.—What precedes is only speculation. We must confine our inquiries about possible material worlds of embodied spirits, and the relation of spirits to their embodiments, to what is found in this corner of Space, and to what can reasonably be inferred from our own human experience. And what of human spirits under relations of Time? Has Spiritual Realism anything to tell about them before the birth or after the death of their bodies?

The Human Spirit, although Embodied, is Unextended, according to Berkeley.—That the human spirit, although embodied, must not be thought of as extended in space like the body, is involved in Berkeley's fundamental principle. A spirit cannot be located like a piece of matter. I animate my body 'all in the whole and all in every part'; so that it is practically pervaded by me. But this cannot mean that the sentient, thinking agent called *myself*, occupies a place in some part of my body, *e.g.* in the brain, or the heart, or the stomach. We cannot speak of the *size* of a pain or the *shape* of a volition, or the

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colour of a thought, unless metaphorically. The identical person of whom there is a consciousness in memory as having existed continuously throughout remembered experience, cannot be conceived as existing in a place, although its body must. One must not think of the spiritual personality as something to be measured by a foot-rule, and if one could, this would throw no light upon the mystery of self-consciousness.

Pre-natal Immortality.—Again, I may trace back the physical antecedents of my body before its birth, as I can trace back the constituents of any other mass of material phenomena; but I cannot retrace in memory any history of my spiritual life before my body was born. The physical antecedents or ‘natural causes’ out of which my body has been evolved may even form an unbeginning succession of changes in material phenomena. My spirit has no memory of itself before birth. My incarnation is the utmost past limit of my self-recollection, through ordinary consciousness at any rate. It may be that ‘our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,’ that ‘the soul that rises with us, our life’s star hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar’; not in *entire* forgetfulness, but trailing clouds of glory, from God who is

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our home.' But unless pre-natal experiences are now subconscious, ready to be revived under future conditions, we are not concerned with them. A pre-natal immortality of this sort is practically non-existent, and a *post-mortem* immortality of like sort would be practically personal annihilation.

Post-mortem Immortality does not necessarily depend upon Pre-natal Immortality.—We have no right to assume that faith in *post-mortem* immortality is dependent on assurance of pre-natal immortality; although some ancient and modern thinkers seem inclined to make this assumption. Why may not my spirit live after death, even if I began to exist individually only at birth? May a moral agent not begin an individual life that is endless, or at least that does not end when the matter organically associated with it dissolves in physical death?

Berkeley on Physical Death.—Berkeley does little to bring spiritual realism to bear upon the destiny of the human spirit after death—the most stupendous question concerning man that can engage human thought. The total impotence of the appearances that compose the things of sense, including our own bodies, on which he is fond of insisting, suggests continued life of the

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spirit. The body, as conceived by spiritual realism, cannot be the active cause of anything; and so its dissolution need not involve the contemporaneous extinction of the associated individual spirit. Here is what he says in one of his letters to his New England friend, Samuel Johnson:—"I see no difficulty in conceiving a change of state such as is vulgarly called Death, as well without as with material substances. It is sufficient for that purpose that we allow sensible bodies, *i.e.* such as are immediately perceived by sight and touch; the existence of which I am so far from questioning (as philosophers are used to do) that I establish it, I think, upon evident principles. Now it seems very easy to conceive the soul or self to exist consciously in a separate state, *i.e.* divested from those limits and laws of motion and perception with which she is embarrassed here, and to exercise herself in new ideas, *without the intervention of those tangible things we call our bodies.* It is even very possible to apprehend how the soul may have ideas of colour without the eye, or of sounds "without the ear."¹ That we might have all our present experiences in sense in an unbodied state is not incredible; nor that, without "our bodily

¹ *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, p. 181. f

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intervention, we might, by a purely spiritual volition, produce changes in sensible phenomena, thus continuing to make them signs of our thoughts and intentions to other spirits, bodied or unbodied; nor that other spirits in return might in like manner make signs to us. But, unless under conditions now inconceivable, should we not be more embarrassed in maintaining social intercourse thus discarnate than when incarnate as we now are?

Berkeley's Negative Argument for Post-mortem Immortality, founded on the Total Impotence of Matter.—He has nothing to say about a pre-natal existence of individual human spirits, but he applies his conception of body to strengthen faith in *post-mortem* immortality, in this way:—‘It must not be supposed,’ he says, ‘that they who assert the natural immortality of the human soul are of opinion that the soul is absolutely incapable of annihilation, even by the infinite power of the Creator who gave it being; but only that it is *not liable to be dissolved by the ordinary laws of matter and motion*. They indeed who hold the soul of man to be only a thin vital flame, or a system of vital spirits, make it perishable and corruptible with the body; since there is nothing more easily dissipated than such a

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(compound) being, which it is naturally impossible should survive the ruin of the tabernacle wherein it is inclosed. But it hath been made evident that *bodies*, of what frame or texture soever, are only passive ideas of the mind ; which is more distant and heterogeneous from them than light is from darkness. Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays, dissolutions, which hourly befall natural bodies (and which is what we mean by the course of nature) cannot possibly affect active, simple, uncompounded substance such as we are.’¹ Such a being therefore is indissoluble by any force in the material universe, which *per se* is powerless. But this is only negative evidence of the continued life of the spirit, after so unique and unparalleled an event as the death of his body is to the owner of that body. One still asks whether bodily dissolution may not be the sensible sign, if not the cause, of the extinction of the spiritual individuality ; and the only reply would be that there is no sufficient reason for putting this interpretation on the signs presented in bodily dissolution.

The Physical Order in Contrast with the Moral Disorder.—But are there not positive signs that death of their bodies does not mean contem-

¹ *Principles*, sec. 141.

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poraneous extinction of human spirits now incarnate? Consider the state of those spirits during their short embodiment between birth and death. Their disordered *moral* condition, and the unequal possession of happiness in proportion to goodness, gravely contrasts with the steady obedience to *physical* law in the material world. The world of the senses is in continuous orderly natural evolution; our spiritual world is at its best an often interrupted struggle towards intellectual and moral order. Natural order is universal; moral order is unattained. The voice of the patriarch expresses the thought of many: 'Let the day perish wherein I was born; let darkness dwell upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave.' If the total impotence of their bodies offers at the most negative evidence of what happens to the spirit when the body dissolves, may not this moral disorder afford to the theist some signs of the inadequacy of our present condition to our final destiny, under Omnipotent Goodness?

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A 'Preponderance' of Goodness and Happiness not enough.—Spiritual realism in Berkeley adds little that is new or distinctive of himself in answer to this question. 'He points out that there is a 'preponderance of happiness' on the whole, and he suggests that sentient pleasure is not after all the purpose of a human life. But this does not meet the dilemma that confronts us when we are asked whether the presence of Evil in any form, or to any extent, is reconcilable with omnipotent goodness being at the heart of the universe. The existence of one wicked man, or of one miserable man, seems as irreconcilable with omnipotent and omniscient goodness as the existence of millions. A mere 'preponderance' suggests defect either of goodness or of power; unless a universe morally perfect from the beginning involves a contradiction, for this even Omnipotence cannot overcome.

Berkeley on the Mixture of Pain and Happiness in the World.—This is what Berkeley has to say:—'As for the mixture of pain and uneasiness which is in the world, pursuant to the general laws of nature, and the actions of finite imperfect spirits, this in the state we are in at present, is indispensably necessary to our well-being. But our prospects are too narrow. We

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take, for instance, the idea of some one particular pain into our thoughts, and account *it* evil; whereas if we enlarge our view, so as to comprehend the various ends, connections, and dependencies of things; on what occasions, and in what proportions we are affected with pain or pleasure; the nature of human freedom; and the design with which we are put into this world,—we shall be forced to acknowledge that those particular things which, considered in themselves, appear to be evil, have the nature of good, when considered linked with the whole system of beings.’¹ This suggests that the sorrows, if not the sins of mankind, are consequences of the steadiness of natural order, and also that evil is an issue of the independent action of human agents, for which they alone are therefore responsible.

May not a slowly progressive Moral Universe be more Divine than one that is Perfect from the Beginning?—May it not be that the moral disorder now found on this planet signifies, not that we are living in an immorally-constituted universe, but rather that the *present* life of the moral agents who inhabit it is purgatorial; not perfect, but on the way to perfection; through struggle and suffering, and frequent re-

¹ *Principles*, sec. 158.

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lapse—consequences of the moral freedom which implies power of moral agents to make themselves bad? May not this purgatorial advance towards the perfect man, instead of perfection from the beginning, consist with theistic optimism, while it is in harmony with the slow and gradual evolution of nature? May it not be that moral and intellectual perfection of men from the beginning is even inconsistent with Omnipotent Goodness? A world of moral agents, encouraged to struggle through trial and temptation towards their own spiritual perfection or salvation, in co-operation with the Omnipotent Spirit, may be a deeper and truer expression of the rationality and morality immanent in the universe than a universe empty of moral agents, even with all the risks of failure which their independent agency involves. The accomplishment of supreme beneficent purpose for each individual agent, through the independent will entrusted to each—imperfectly realised in this life—may be conceived as the issue, not of present struggles and failures only, but of a succession of probations of which the present is only one. ‘Work out your own salvation with fear; for it is God that worketh in you.’ The Divine Ideal may be a universe, in this slow way of moral trial and struggle,

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becoming gradually more and more valuable morally. But of this later on, in connection with the moral character of the Universal Mind.

‘This Mortal must put on Immortality’ in a Progressive Moral World.—Whether or not this is the explanation of the sin and sorrow in our present world, their existence seems to show that the earthly life of man is not the whole, that the death of the body does not mean extinction of the spirit. Can present evil on this planet be otherwise reconciled with Omnipotent Goodness being at the heart of the Whole? There must surely be a larger and purer life than is yet visible. ‘This mortal must put on immortality.’ More than eternally disordered lives is implied in our final faith.

The Natural and the Spiritual Body.—Does *post-mortem* life mean embodied life? And is it too a social life; or if so, is future social intercourse maintained as in the present material world; or by another kind of sense symbolism having no analogy to the present, its qualities being all different from those which appear in our present organs, and therefore unimaginable by us, like the sense world of Micromegas? If we are really living and moving, and having our being in a universe charged throughout with

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Omnipotent Goodness, must there not be sufficient analogy of the future with the present to connect personal identity in the life after death with the present social environment? The apostolic rebuke of those who ask, 'How the dead are raised up? and with what body do they come?' is satisfied with the vague reply, that the 'natural body' sown in death becomes after death 'a spiritual body,' somehow different from the present one.

Are Present Socialties dissolved for ever by Death?—But what of human spirits who have been associated in this life by special ties of love? Are those ties for ever dissolved by death? Are the human associations of family and friendship only transitory expedients to meet mundane wants? Is their final dissolution consistent either with continued personal identity, or with the perfect beneficence of the universal order?

'It is an old belief
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more.

'Beyond the sphere of time,
And sin and fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.

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‘That o’reed I fain would keep,
That hope I’ll not forego ;
Eternal be the sleep,
Unless we waken so.’

Spiritual Realism and these Questions.—These questions carry us to the borderland of the knowable. Materialistic realism closes the prospect. *Its* universe is throughout ‘a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment,’ appear as its only issue. Only in a spiritually constituted universe *can* we even ask, what the *moral character* of the Supreme Power is, and what the spiritual relations of the Universal Spirit are to the struggling, striving, and sorrowing spirits of men. In a finally material reality there is no room for this question. Purpose—good, evil, and indifferent—is all excluded. Under spiritual realism we can at least ask whether the universal spiritual purpose is optimist, or pessimist, or indifferent. Can man, with his limited intellectual faculty and experience, dispose in any positive way of the final problem of the universe? This supreme question and Berkeley’s relation to it belong to the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

GOD, OR THE UNIVERSAL MIND, AND THÉISTIC

OPTIMISM

 **Nature virtually Supernatural.**—The essentially spiritual reality of the material universe is the distinctive teaching of Spiritual Realism. The spiritual realist finds all that he sees, his own body included, to be appearances that depend for their actual and active reality upon the perceptions and the free agency of conscious Spirit. Their dependence upon *human* spirits is only occasional and interrupted—for men come and go, realising now this and now that, in their perceptions; and the changes due to their individual volitions are comparatively few and uncertain among the changes in nature. But the reality of the things of sense is not thus occasional and interrupted. The material universe is constantly known, and constantly kept in natural order, by the Universal Spirit; it, may be in a natural evolution that is unbeginning and

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endless, its laws being the visible expression of Supreme Active Reason.

The Physical Cosmos and the Moral Chaos.—

The world of human life is a contrast to the material world. Here much that is, *ought not to be*. The moral order is disturbed; the physical order is steadily maintained. This fact is the supreme riddle of existence. The material world is wholly obedient to its natural order: the spirits of men are found resisting the moral order; and often reward seems to go to the disobedient, while suffering is the lot of the righteous. Is there room, under these conditions, for the faith that we are having our being in a universe charged with Omnipotent Goodness? Is implicit trust in the rationality and morality of the universe consistent with these ominous conditions? And what follows if final trust in the spiritually constituted universe, of which we are a part, and on which we continually depend, is therefore not possible? Are we not involved in Pyrrhonism with its total doubt and despair?

The Idea of God.—The *moral character* of the Omnipotent Spirit, in whom we live and have our being, is thus the supreme consideration under spiritual realism. Materialism (necessarily) turns at last upon blind abstract force, alien

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to all moral conceptions. The living God, neither dead matter nor abstract idea, is the final unity of spiritual realism. 'God is a mind, not an abstract idea compounded of inconsistencies and prescinded from all real things, as some moderns understand abstraction, but a really existing Spirit.... Whether the Supreme Mind be abstracted from the sensible world, and considered by itself as distinct from and presiding over the created system; or whether the whole universe, including mind together with the mundane body, is conceived to be God, and the creatures to be partial manifestations of the divine essence—there is no atheism in either case, whatever misconceptions there may be, as long as Mind or Intellect is understood to preside over, govern, and conduct the whole frame of things.'¹ The theism of Berkeley is large enough to comprehend all who see the immanence of Active Reason in the material and the human world. It is atheism only if the universe, in its immanent Spirit, is either diabolic or indifferent to moral purpose, when we find ourselves in an untrustworthy universe, a universe unfit to be reasoned about or acted in. A theistically constituted universe is optimist at the root.²

¹ *Siris*, sec. 323, 328.

² Argued in my *Philosophy of Theism*, part iii. chap. 2, and *passim*.

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The Atheistic Gospel of Death.—That without our own consent we have been born into an immoral universe, and that the only escape is through final extinction by death of the unhappy individual who made his appearance at birth, is a gospel that has been offered to suffering mankind in all ages and in different forms, as by Buddha in the East and by Lucretius in Greece. But a gospel of Death is surely a shallow gospel. If the constitution of things is consistent with our introduction at birth into a life so disordered as that we crave for death to dissolve self-consciousness for ever, may not death after all be only the introduction to another stage on a still downward journey? If the issue of birth is so disappointing, there is no evidence that the issue of death, in an atheistic universe, is to give relief. The span of a human life spent between a pre-natal and a *post-mortem* eternity remains a mystery, without ground for comfort in its termination. We did not, by our own responsible will, become individual persons, and we do not know that by death we can get out of suffering personality.

Polytheism and Manicheism.—Polytheism, with its plurality of finite 'deities,' although ministering to the religious instinct in its earlier

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and cruder stages, is virtually atheistic. Its 'gods' are not eternal, and to none of them is omnipotent goodness attributed. At the most they are only magnified men, objects of superstitious awe, ready to be propitiated by offerings, hypothetical entities, presupposing, like all else that is finite, the existence of Omnipotent Spirit. The polytheist's gods are not God in the distinctive and unique meaning of the word. At the utmost, like human spirits, they can only be part of the universe in which the true God must still be omnipresent. If the gods of polytheism really existed, their existence would presuppose what the monotheist means by God, as much as the existence of the world of the senses and of mankind involves this presupposition. And the same may be said of Manicheism. None of these faiths afford anchorage for final faith. They are in vogue only when religion and intelligence are in a crude undeveloped state, 'without God in the world.' Neither of the two antagonistic 'gods' of Manicheism is supreme and absolute.

✓ **Abstract Deism.**—The abstract God admitted by the two 'minute philosophers,' in Berkeley's Dialogue, is not less atheistic. To allow that God exists, while denying that God is practically knowable, is only a polite retention of the name

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after emptying it of meaning. These minute philosophers grant that the mere being of God is a point of no consequence; an agnostic may concede it as a matter of indifference. 'The great point is in what sense the word God is to be taken in. The very Epicureans allowed the being of gods, but they were indolent gods, unconcerned with human affairs. Hobbes allowed a corporeal God; and Spinoza held the universe to be god. I could wish indeed the word God were omitted, because in most minds it is coupled with a sort of superstitious awe, the very root of all religion. I shall not, nevertheless, be much disturbed though the name be retained, and the being of God allowed, in any sense but that of a Mind which knows all things, like some judge or magistrate with infinite observation and intelligence. The belief of God in this sense fills a mind with scruples, lays him under constraint, and embitters his very being. But in another sense it may be attended with no great ill consequence. . . . Diagoras, a man of much reading and inquiry, discovered that, once upon a time, the most profound and speculative divines, finding it impossible to reconcile the attributes of God, taken in the common sense, or in any known sense, with human reason and the appear-

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ances of things, taught that the words *knowledge*, *wisdom*, *goodness*, and such like, when spoken of the Deity, must be understood in a quite distinct sense from what they signify in the vulgar acceptance, and from anything that we can form a notion of or conceive. Hence whatever objections might be made against the attributes of God they easily solved, by denying that those attributes belonged to God in this or that or any known particular sense; which was the same thing as to deny they belonged to Him at all. And thus denying the attributes of God, they in effect denied His being, though perhaps they were not aware of it.¹ In short, God *can* lie, or *can* be unjust and cruel, in the human meaning of those words, and yet 'good,' in this transcendental use of the word goodness.

✓ **A Slowly Progressive Moral Universe may be more truly Divine than One Perfect from the Beginning.**—On the other hand, in Berkeley's spiritual realism all that is real necessarily culminates in Omnipotent Spirit, percipient and active, presupposed (and this in the human meaning of the words 'spirit' and 'omnipotence') in the continuous orderly reality of the material world. Nature is accordingly a system of

¹ See *Alciphron*, Dial. iv. sec. 16, 17. P

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interpretable signs, in and through which God is constantly speaking, and which men are constantly interpreting, for the purposes of daily life, or in the formation of science; so showing that they are in intercourse with Intelligence sufficiently akin to their own for all human purposes, whatever infinite divine omniscience in itself may be. 'Thus the phenomena of nature, which strike on the senses and can be interpreted by man, form not only a magnificent spectacle, but a most coherent, entertaining, and instructive discourse. Natural productions, it is true, are not all equally perfect. But neither doth it suit with the order of things that they should be thus perfect. General rules or laws of nature are necessary to make the world intelligible, and from the constant observance of such rules *evils* will sometimes unavoidably ensue; things will be produced at slow lengths of time, and arrive at different degrees of perfection.' These words of Berkeley suggest that a moral universe which gradually increases in value may be more divine than a moral universe that is perfect from the beginning. It presents human personalities, educated in a divine school by struggle and suffering, rather than always perfect—co-operating in a slow, progressive, often inter-

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rupted evolution, as suggested in the preceding chapter.

Berkeley's Liberal Interpretation of Theistic Faith.—The immanence or omnipresence of God in the material universe, and in the human spirit, with the final harmony of the Whole, is, as we have seen, a thought apparent in *Siris*, along with a generous inclination to welcome even faint approaches to theistic faith. If any one should deny that God knows anything external to Himself, should this, he asks, be justly counted an atheistic opinion? 'Might we not conceive that God may be said to be All in divers senses; as He is the origin of all beings; as the *νοῦς* is the *νοητά*, a doctrine both of Plato and Aristotle; as the *νοῦς* comprehends and orders and sustains the whole mundane system. Aristotle declares that the divine force permeates the entire universe.'¹ The influence of Berkeley's Neoplatonic studies in his old age is here again apparent.

Berkeley's Last Words in Philosophy.—In the end Berkeley holds back in awe on the border line that limits the intellectual vision of man. His last words in *Siris* express in a tone of philosophical eloquence his view of the final human answers. 'In this mortal life we must be

¹ See *Siris*, secs. 328, also 300, 325, 327.

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satisfied to make the best of those glimpses within our reach. It is Plato's remark that while we sit still we are never the wiser, but going into the river and moving up and down is the way to discover its depths and shallows. If we exercise and bestir ourselves, we may even here discover something. 'The eye by long use comes to see even in the darkest cavern. Truth is the cry of all, but the game of a few. Certainly where it is the chief passion, it doth not give way to vulgar cares and views; nor is it contented with a little ardour in the early times of life, active perhaps to pursue, but not so fit to weigh and revise. He that would make a real progress in knowledge must devote his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first fruits, at the altar of truth.'¹ ✓

Man needs a Morally Trustworthy Universe, as alone fit to be reasoned about.—Omniscient and omnipotent Spirit at the root of all, and animating all, is Berkeley's final conception. This is what he finds in '*esse is percipi*,' combined with the recognition of power exclusively in Spirit. But perfect *goodness* of the Universal Spirit is not necessarily the consequence of the final spirituality of the Real. The Spirit may be diabolic, or indifferent. So for man in his

¹ *Siris*, secs. 367, 368.

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practical relations to the universe, the moral character of God is the urgent question. It makes the differences between final hope and final despair in the life of man during his momentary embodiment on this planet. If the omnipotent Spirit is morally untrustworthy, omnipotence and omniscience only aggravate doubt and despair. The ominous facts that appear in the history and present state of mankind may seem irreconcilable with Goodness in the Supreme Power; yet unless the Supreme Power is morally *perfect* the universe is not fit to live in. Its ultimate intelligibility and morality are postulated in our title to trust even in its natural order.

~~///~~ **Berkeley fails to show how we are assured that the Universe is Ultimately Good.—** Answers to the questions thus raised are hardly found in Berkeley. His exposition of Spiritual Realism adds little to our resources for meeting them. It adds emphasis, however, to our right to consider them; for they are relevant only so far as we are entitled to think of the universe as finally a *spiritual* reality; fit, therefore, to be tested as to its *moral* order. Material Realism cannot ask what the moral character of Matter is; and Matter *per se* is its only deity. We have seen how Berkeley meets the difficulty

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which some find in the gradual methods of natural evolution, when they treat tardy progress instead of perfection from the first, as inconsistent with the moral perfection of God. And he offers a similar reply to the objector who points to 'the miseries incident to human life,' as an argument that 'Nature is not actuated by perfect wisdom and goodness.' He explains human evils by the fact that the Supreme Agent follows general rules. This, even more than if all were perfect from the beginning, speaks, he thinks, for the wisdom and goodness of the Omnipotent Spirit. He asks us to enlarge our view of the proportion in which we are affected with pain and pleasure; the purpose of our present embodiment; and our freedom in action and consequent personal responsibility for our acts.

Preponderance of Good in the Moral World is not enough under Omnipotence.—'Preponderance' of good in this corner of the universe is what he thinks he finds, when he tries to measure the proportions of the good and the bad. But this fact, if granted, would fail to reconcile perfect goodness with absolute power. Instead of a halting inference from a necessarily limited number of observed facts, must not the rationality and


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morality of the universe be (at least unconsciously) *presupposed*, as the condition of our having any trustworthy intercourse with it, even through our senses? Its supposed sense symbolism is not worth trying to interpret, if it may become of a sudden all hollow and deluding. Reason immanent in the physical order of things, on which all the natural sciences proceed, is not guaranteed in a limited past experience of a universe which we enter as strangers to its necessities; unless we can be justified in taking for granted that our surroundings 'cannot lie,' because the omnipotent Spirit cannot deceive, being perfectly good, and good to all. Unless this can be postulated, reason cannot be applied to the facts of life. An immorally constituted universe would be uninterpretable.

~~X~~ **No Security for Cosmic Order in an Immoral or non-Moral Universe.**—A universe that is trustworthy enough to be interpreted and reasoned about scientifically, presupposes that the World-Spirit 'cannot lie,' that He cannot contradict truth, and justice, and beneficence. If He could there would be no security in spiritual realism even for the continuance of cosmic order, not to speak of beneficence in the final destiny of our now embodied lives. Under the atheistic con-

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ception, faith and hope, sustained as the springs of life in an ethically constituted universe, dissolve in universal doubt and pessimist despair.

Is Evil in the World necessarily inconsistent with Perfection in God?—Unless the absurdity of final moral faith can be demonstrated, it is reasonable to rest in faith and hope. But does the appearance of sin and suffering on this planet *demonstrate* that faith in the perfect ethical constitution of the world must be irrational? Is evil in mankind necessarily inconsistent with perfect wisdom and goodness in the Omnipotent? 

Is the Existence of Finite Agents free to Act Responsibly consistent with Omnipotent Goodness?—This question recalls Berkeley's undeveloped hint about 'enlarging our view,' so as to take in 'human freedom' and the part which morally responsible agents play in this world.¹ Does the existence of persons who are free to make themselves good or bad contradict absolutely goodness of purpose at the root of all? *Can* God rightly delegate power to act responsibly to persons? If man's moral respon-

¹ See *Principles*, sec. 153, also *Siris*, sec. 257. The ambiguity of the term 'freedom' should be noted; for it is sometimes applied (as here) to the power of moral agents to make themselves wicked, and in other cases to their moral perfection or liberation from evil.

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sibility for what he does means that he is the *creator* of acts for which *he* can be justly condemned, does this subtract from the perfection of the Universal Spirit?

Is not a Bar to the Existence of Free Agents a Greater Limitation of Divine Power and Goodness?—One may ask in return whether inability to admit moral agents into the universe does not involve a greater limitation of omnipotence? And the fact that men *must* be creators of *acts* for which they are responsible does not mean that they create *the agents* to whom the acts are finally referable. We all enter life without our own leave, and therefore we are not responsible for beginning to live; but this is no bar to our acts of will afterwards being ours, so that we can be justly condemned when they are evil. Here Spiritual Realism contrasts fundamentally with Spinoza.

Basis of Theistic Optimism.—Optimism in the final constitution of the universe is implied in its rationality and rectitude; and this in its turn is only another way of expressing its ultimately theistic constitution. Theistic optimism is thus at the root of the faith and hope which intercourse with the universe presupposes. That this intercourse would otherwise be

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irrational, and therefore paralysed, is the argument which in the end sustains theistic optimism. Reason is paralysed by the supposition that truth and falsehood, beneficence and cruelty, justice and its opposite—according to the highest human conceptions of these virtues¹—are indifferent in the universal system, and are imposed on man only by human limitations; or that our ethical conceptions, in the human meaning of duty and moral responsibility, can be subject to arbitrary will. The *character* of the Omnipotent Spirit would otherwise be no security for the permanence of even physical order. If transcendent or divine morality *can* consist with what man must condemn as unrighteous, then the faith that inspires science and human life must die.

May not this Mortal Life be Purgatorial?—
Berkeley's reference to slow and often interrupted progress in the world of moral agents suggests how the sin and sorrow found on this planet may consist with optimism at the root of the universal order. For may not gradual amelioration through power to resist good be involved in the

¹ It must be noted that human conceptions of what is reasonable and morally right, crude at first, are in progressive development.

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optimist ideal; necessitated 'goodness' in a finite agent not being moral goodness? May not moral perfection be finally attainable only with free play of the individual will, and gradual education through suffering and failures? May not a prolonged purgatory, begun if not completed in this embodied life on earth, continued it may be through unknown periods after the death of these bodies,—may not this be the optimist way to final perfection of the individual character? At any rate is one justified in answering these questions with a dogmatic negation? The endless life in its earlier stages may be essentially purgatorial; and the purgatorial discipline may be more or less prolonged in different individuals in proportion to individual resistance.

The Universe is a Constant Miracle.—If by miracles are meant events due to the *immediate* agency of Omnipotent Goodness, the material world of Spiritual Realism is a constant miracle. All that happens, except what is due to the free agency of finite persons, morally responsible for their own actions, is the immediate issue of miraculous action. 'Nothing can be more evident than the existence of God, who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of

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sensations which continually affect us; on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, 'in whom we live and move and have our being.' But an objector may say, Hath *Nature* no share in the production of natural things, and must all be ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God? I answer, If by *Nature* is meant only the visible series of effects or sensations imprinted on our minds according to certain fixed and general laws, then it is plain that *Nature* taken in this sense cannot produce anything at all. But if by *Nature* is meant some Being distinct from God, as well as from the laws of nature and things perceived by sense, then I must confess the word is to me an empty sound without any intelligible meaning annexed to it; a vain chimera introduced by those heathens who had not just notions of the omnipresence and infinite perfection of God.¹ *Nature*, in short, is a divine miracle, not an independent agent. ✓

Special Miracles.—This constant miracle of the universe is not inconsistent with the occasional occurrence of events that are inexplicable under the rules of the divine order as thus far discovered by man. If the material world exists for the sake of persons, physical events, unaccountable

¹ *Principles*, sec. 149, 150.

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by our limited intelligence, yet in harmony with the supreme order, may occur; it may be, as means of calling human attention to deeper and truer spiritual revelations of God than man could otherwise realise. 'Special miracles' of this sort are recognised by Berkeley as at least 'probable,' while he dismisses *a priori* reasons against their occurrence as unreasonable. 'Probable arguments are for him a sufficient ground of faith' in 'unaccountable events' that are associated with revelations of God which might otherwise have remained dormant in the individual. 'Who ever supposed,' he asks, 'that scientific proofs were necessary to make a Christian? It will be sufficient if such analogy appears between the dispensations of grace and nature, as may make it probable (although much should be unaccountable in both) to suppose them derived from the same author.'¹ The last sentence curiously anticipates Butler's argument in his *Analogy*, published four years after those words appeared in the *Minute Philosopher* of Berkeley. But it was left unelaborated and unapplied by the author of the *Minute Philosopher*.

Revelation of the Universal Spirit in the

¹ *Alciphron, or The Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vi. sec. 31.

GOD, OR THE UNIVERSAL MIND

Cosmos and in Christ. — The more articulate revelation of the Universal Spirit in and through Christ *ultimately* appeals to the same inevitable presuppositions out of which optimist theistic faith in the moral rightness and perfect goodness of the Supreme Power emerges. Hence the response of the Spirit in man to the assurance that 'God is love,' having no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. So that the ultimate realisation of goodness in all embodied spirits—not for their merits, but for its own sake—may be taken as the end towards which progressing humanity is under God slowly advancing. We have found this faith and hope latent even in the universal trust in the credibility of experience, and in the scientific assumption of constant order in nature—reinforced under the claim of a more articulate revelation, by its experienced adaptation to the moral needs of man, and to the limitations of human intelligence. For is not a perfect man the highest moral conception of God that man can rise to? Does not this give to God in Christ a unique place in the history of mankind? He has called forth, in an unexampled degree, the latent faith in the moral perfection of the Universal Spirit

BERKELEY AND SPIRITUAL REALISM

that is involved in the trustworthiness of external nature—especially when the evolution of the material world is recognised, as by Berkeley, under his doctrine of the total impotence of matter, to be due to the immediate agency of God.

Further development of Spiritual Realism.—Want of space forbids me to pursue suggestions of other ways in which Spiritual Realism admits of development and application. It remains, in conclusion, to cast an eye back upon our past journey.

RETROSPECT

Berkeley's Distinctive Principle.—We have found the distinctive principle of Berkeley's Realism in the truth, to himself evident, that the material world has its being and agency in Spirit. In itself it is wholly impotent, and finally dependent for its seeming agency upon the Universal Mind. Its constant transformations, on which our embodied lives depend, are accordingly believed to be cosmical and interpretable, not chaotic and uninterpretable; the cosmos being due to the constant activity of the all-pervading omnipotent Spirit. This at least is the deepest and truest ultimate conception of Infinite Power that is

RETROSPECT

available for man, inadequate as it must be to the divine or infinite Reality. So far Berkeley.

The Moral Character of the Universal Spirit.

—But what of the moral character of the Universal Spirit? Spiritual Existence and Omnipotence do not carry us far, unless the spiritual Reality is morally perfect. Berkeley does not help us much at this critical stage. We find ourselves in a universe in which the physical cosmos, moved by the Universal Spirit, often takes the appearance of moral indifference, in the seeming cruelties perpetrated under its evolution; and the embodied spirits on this planet are morally far short of the ideal man. What must be the moral character of the Omnipotent Spirit who is revealed through a universe like this? Is moral perfection present in this revelation, or does it mean moral indifference, or even moral imperfection and limited power?

Our Absolute Security. — Unless we are to subside into universal pessimist doubt, we must *presuppose*, in the face of these ominous facts, that we are in a universe that is fit to be reasoned about—a succession of calculable changes, so that we can have experience and science, and can forecast our way with more or less reasonable confidence in proportion to our intellectual pro-

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gress. Is not our only absolute security for this, the faith that the directing Spirit is morally perfect, and omnipotent—omnipotent, that is to say, within the limit of non-contradiction, for even Omnipotence ‘cannot lie,’ and cannot make things that are equal to the same thing unequal to one another?

The Final Alternative—Unless then it can be shown that the ominous signs presented by the universe *demonstrably contradict* perfect goodness in the Universal Power, are we not obliged, by the *reductio ad absurdum* alternative of universal pessimist doubt, to accept in faith and hope the moral perfection of the Supreme? Have we not, in the moral discipline and educative influence of physical nature, at least a possible explanation of its supposed cruelty and injustice; while the risks involved in the existence and independent activity of moral agents, thus responsible for their acts, may sufficiently account for present manifestations of evil under Theistic Optimism? If Nature is practically trustworthy, and fit to be scientifically reasoned about, the Omnipotent Spirit immanent in it must be perfectly good and design the goodness of all. This is final faith.

A SHORT LIST OF BOOKS BEARING ON THE SUBJECT

1. *The Collected Works of Berkeley*, edited with Annotations and Dissertations, by Professor Campbell Fraser. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871.
2. Second Edition of the above, amended by Professor Campbell Fraser. 4 vols. Oxford, 1901.
3. *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, by Professor Campbell Fraser. 1 vol. Oxford, 1871.
4. *Annotated Selections from Berkeley*, by the same Author. Fifth Edition. Oxford, 1899.
5. *Berkeley*, by the same Author. Second Edition. Edinburgh, 1903.
6. *Berkeley and Human Knowledge*, by Professor Krant. University of Pennsylvania, 1874.
7. *Étude sur la Vie et les Œuvres Philosophiques de Berkeley*. A. Penjon. 1878.
8. *Berkeley and Positivism*, by St. George Stock. 1879.
9. *Essays and Addresses: Berkeley*, by the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour. 1893.

DATES IN THE LIFE OF BERKELEY

First Period

Birth in Co. Kilkenny,	1685
In Trinity College, Dublin,	1700-13
Publication of <i>New Theory of Vision</i> ,	1709
„ <i>Principles of Human Knowledge</i> ,	1710
„ <i>Three Dialogues</i> ,	1713

Second Period

In London, France, and Italy,	1713-20
Publication of <i>De Motu</i> ,	1720
In Trinity College, Dublin,	1721-24
Made Dean of Derry,	1724
The Bermuda Project and Negotiations in London,	1724-28
Departure for America,	1728
In Rhode Island,	1728-31
Publication of <i>Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher</i> ,	1732
„ <i>Vindication of the Theory of Vision</i> ,	1733

Third Period

Made Bishop of Cloyne,	1734
Distress in Ireland and <i>The Querist</i> ,	1735-38
Publication of <i>Siris</i> ,	1744
Departure for Oxford,	1752
Death at Oxford,	1753

PHILOSOPHIES ANCIENT AND MODERN

THOMAS HOBBES

NOTE

As a consequence of the success of the series of *Religions Ancient and Modern*, Messrs. CONSTABLE have decided to issue a set of similar primers, with brief introductions, lists of dates, and selected authorities, presenting to the wider public the salient features of the *Philosophies* of Greece and Rome and of the Middle Ages, as well as of modern Europe. They will appear in the same handy Shilling volumes, with neat cloth bindings and paper envelopes, which have proved so attractive in the case of the *Religions*. The writing in each case will be confided to an eminent authority, and one who has already proved himself capable of scholarly yet popular exposition within a small compass.

Among the first volumes to appear will be:—

Early Greek Philosophy. By A. W. BENN, author of *The Philosophy of Greece, Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*.

Stoicism. By Professor ST. GEORGE STOCK, author of *Deductive Logic*, editor of the *Apology of Plato*, etc.

Plato. By Professor A. E. TAYLOR, St. Andrews University, author of *The Problem of Conduct*.

Scholasticism. By Father RICKABY, S.J.

Hobbes. By Professor A. E. TAYLOR.

Locke. By Professor ALEXANDER, of Owens College.

Comte and Mill. By T. W. WHITTAKER, author of *The Neoplatonists, Apollonius of Tyana and other Essays*.

Herbert Spencer. By W. H. HUDSON, author of *An Introduction to Spencer's Philosophy*.

Schopenhauer. By T. W. WHITTAKER.

Berkeley. By Professor CAMPBELL FRASER, D.C.L., LL.D.

Bergsen. By Father TYRRELL.

THOMAS'S HOBBS

By
A. E. TAYLOR

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS brief sketch has throughout been written directly from the original text of Hobbes himself and his contemporary biographers, though use has, of course, been made, especially in the first chapter, of the labours of such modern students as Professor Croom Robertson, Professor F. Tönnies, and Sir Leslie Stephen. The verbal quotations from Hobbes's works are given from the following editions: (1) *Elements of Philosophy, (Concerning Body)*, London, 1656; (2) *Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*, from the third edition of *Hobbes's Tripos*, London, 1864; (3) *Leviathan*, from the reprint of the first edition in the series of 'Cambridge English Classics,' 1904, which has been carefully compared with my own copy of the edition of 1651, (apparently one of the 'inferior' issue). The spelling of these editions has been preserved, but the punctuation modified in accord with present-day usage. Allusions to the Latin texts of (1) and (3) are based on the edition of Hobbes's *Opera Philosophica* published by Blaeuw of Amsterdam in 1668.

A. E. TAYLOR.

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THOMAS HOBBS

CHAPTER I

LIFE

THE long life of Thomas Hobbes covers almost the whole of the most critical period alike in the growth of modern science and in the development of the British Constitution. Born in the year of the Armada, Hobbes did not die until nine years before the great Revolution which finally determined the question whether the British Islands should be ruled constitutionally or absolutely. He lived through the Stuart attempt to convert England into an absolute monarchy, the Puritan revolution and great Civil War, the political and ecclesiastical experiments of the Long Parliament and of Cromwell, the restoration of the exiled line, and the beginnings of modern Whiggism and Nonconformity. Still more remarkable were the changes which came over the face of science during the same period. When Hobbes entered

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the University as a lad, the sham Aristotelianism of the Middle Ages was still officially taught in its lecture-rooms; before he died, mechanical science had been placed on a secure footing by Kepler, Galileo, and Descartes, the foundations of the scientific study of physiology and magnetism had been laid by Harvey and Gilbert, the Royal Society for experimental research into nature had been incorporated for more than a generation, analytical geometry had been created by Descartes, and the calculus by Leibniz and Newton, while it was only eight years after his death that the final exposition of the new mechanical conception of the universe was given by Newton's *Principia*. It is only natural that a philosopher who was also a keen observer of men and affairs, living through such a period of crisis, should have made the most daring of all attempts to base the whole of knowledge on the principles of mechanical materialism, and should also have become the creator of a purely naturalistic theory of ethics and sociology.

Thomas Hobbes, the second son of the Vicar of Westport, now included in the town of Malmesbury in Wiltshire, was prematurely born on Good Friday, April 5, 1588. His own theory was that both his premature birth and his constitu-

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tional timidity were consequences of his mother's alarm at the impending approach of the Great Armada. The father, 'one of the ignorant Sir Johns of Elizabeth's time,' fell into trouble by assaulting a rival cleric at the church door, and was obliged to go into hiding, but the boy's education was cared for by a maternal uncle, who was a flourishing glover and alderman of Malmesbury. After a period of preliminary schooling at Malmesbury and Westport, where he learned enough of the classical languages to translate Euripides' *Medea* into Latin verse at the age of fourteen, the lad was sent to Oxford, where he was entered at Magdalen Hall, then an important centre of Puritanism. It was a time of general relaxation of university discipline, and the acrimonious attacks made by Hobbes in later life on the English Universities as haunts of debauchery, hotbeds of disloyalty, and places where the elements of Mathematics and Physics were unknown, must have been chiefly based on his undergraduate experiences. He tells us himself of the contempt he conceived for the traditional scholastic logic and physics expounded by his tutors, and of the joy he felt in escaping from their lectures to the bookshops where he could pore over books of travel and maps, and follow

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in imagination the voyages of the great Elizabethan buccaneers.

This rather unprofitable period of University life ended, after five years, when Hobbes graduated Bachelor of Arts on February 5, 1607. Immediately afterwards he formed what was to prove a lifelong and honourable connection with the rising family of Cavendish. William Cavendish, Baron Hardwick (afterwards Earl of Devonshire), second son by her second marriage of the famous 'Bess of Hardwick,' being anxious to find a suitable companion and tutor for his eldest son, offered the post to Hobbes on the recommendation of the then President of Magdalen Hall. By all accounts Hobbes's actual services seem to have been those of companion rather than tutor. Young Mr. Cavendish was a decided spendthrift, and it became Hobbes's function to assist him in raising frequent loans. Studies were freely neglected, and Hobbes himself 'almost forgot his Latin.' Fortunately, in 1610, the two young men were sent to make the grand tour of the Continent, and travelled together over a great part of France, Germany, and Italy. As yet Hobbes appears to have been untouched by the new scientific movement, though it was only in the preceding year that Kepler had published

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the first two of his famous laws, and Galileo was at the very height of his glory, owing to his recent discovery of the satellites of Jupiter. The main effect of the journey was to revive Hobbes's interest in his neglected literary studies, and to send him home with a fixed determination to make himself a thorough scholar. The resolve was executed so successfully that Hobbes not merely became one of the most vigorous and luminous of English writers, but learned to handle Latin, still the general language of the learned world, with rare force and fluency. The first-fruits of this renewed interest in learning was an English translation of Thucydides, published in 1628-9, for the purpose, as Hobbes said at the time, of educating his readers in the true principles of statesmanship. Afterwards, when his absolutist political theories had been fully developed, he wished it to be believed that his real object had been to warn Englishmen against the dangers of democracy, by showing them how much wiser a single great statesman is than a multitude.

From Hobbes's admirer, John Aubrey, we learn something about the circles in which he was moving at this time of his life. Foremost among his friends stands Francis Bacon, who 'loved to

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converse with him,' and employed him on the translation of some of the famous *Essays*, notably that on *The True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*, into Latin. This connection can be shown to belong to the years 1621-6 when Bacon, after his political disgrace, was devoting himself entirely to scientific work in his retreat at Gorhambury. The influence of Bacon, however, has left no trace on Hobbes's own matured thought. He barely mentions the Chancellor in his writings, and has no place for 'Baconian induction' in his own conception of scientific method. Bacon's zeal for experiment, the redeeming feature in an otherwise chaotic scheme of thought, is entirely alien to the essentially deductive and systematic spirit of the Hobbian philosophy. Other friends of this period were Ben Jonson, the reigning literary dictator of London, Edward Herbert, Baron Cherbury, the 'first of the English Deists,' the antagonist against whom Locke's attack on 'innate ideas' was afterwards to be directed, and the now forgotten Scottish poet, Sir Robert Ayton.

In 1628 Hobbes's ex-pupil died, after a two years' tenure of the Earldom of Devonshire, leaving the family estates heavily encumbered. The necessary retrenchments involved a tem-

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porary severance of Hobbes's connection with the Cavendishes, and from 1629 to 1631 he acted as tutor to the son of Sir Gervase Clifton, a gentleman of Nottinghamshire. He accompanied this new pupil on a foreign tour, which apparently extended through France and as far as Venice. It was probably during this period that an incident occurred which was to exercise a lasting, and not entirely happy influence on the whole of Hobbes's subsequent thought. At the age of forty he was, for the first time, introduced to the works of Euclid, and at once 'fell in love with geometry,' being attracted, he says, more by the rigorous manner of proof employed than by the matter of the science. (Mathematics, we must remember, were then only beginning to be seriously studied in England. Hobbes tells us that in his undergraduate days geometry was still looked upon generally as a form of the 'Black Art,' and it was not until 1619 that the will of Sir Henry Savile, Warden of Merton College, established the first Professorships of Geometry and Astronomy at Oxford.)

In 1631 Hobbes was recalled from Paris by the widow of his late pupil to take charge of the education of her eldest son, the third Earl of Devonshire, then a boy of twelve. By 1634 the

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lad was thought old enough to make the continental tour, and Hobbes accompanied him on a journey through France and Italy, from which the pair did not return until 1637. This third foreign journey was destined to be the turning-point of Hobbes's intellectual life. All through the journey he was haunted by a single idea, the thought of the omnipresence of motion in nature, and of the apparent variety of natural objects as a mere effect of diversity of motion in the different parts of body. The origin of this absorption in the notion of motion he derives from the following undated incident. In a company of learned men, among whom he was present, a chance reference to sensation provoked the contemptuous question, 'And, pray, what is sense?' Reflecting long on this chance question, Hobbes came to the conclusion that if all bodies were at rest or all moved exactly in the same way, there would be no means of distinguishing any one thing from any other, and therefore no sensation. Hence not only must the whole of physical nature consist, as Galileo was already declaring, of diversity of motions of homogeneous particles, but the same must be true of the inner world of our so-called 'mental processes,' they must all be but so many diverse motions in what we now

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call our 'nervous system.' With this conclusion Hobbes's path as a philosopher was marked out. His task was to be the exhibition of all the facts of the universe, and more particularly those of the inner life of emotion and will, as consequences of the primary laws of motion. Hence, in the preface to the *De Corpore*, after mentioning as the founders of true physical science Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Harvey, he adds that the true doctrine of civil society is no older than his own book *De Cive*.

Evidence discovered by Dr. Ferdinand Tönnies has now made it probable that the facts just described belong to a date some years anterior to the journey of 1637, but, in any case, Hobbes's third residence abroad marks a definite epoch in his life. It is the date at which he first takes his place as a recognised member of the band of European thinkers who were aiming at the systematic reconstruction of science. In Italy he met the great Galileo, not yet, indeed, blind, but confined by the Inquisition to his villa, and a little tarnished in his renown by his insincere recantation. Almost more important were the connections formed on the return to Paris in 1637. Here Hobbes became one of the circle which centred around the famous Franciscan friar,

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Marin Mersenne, who performed what, in the absence of scientific journals, was the indispensable service of furthering the communication of knowledge by bringing learned men together, in person or by correspondence. Mersenne's cell, says Hobbes, was more to him than all the universities. We may note that this same year saw the publication of the first work of another of Mersenne's constant correspondents, his old school-fellow, René Descartes, now for years settled in his self-chosen Dutch seclusion.

Before the end of 1637 Hobbes and his pupil were once more in England, where the times, as we know, now began to be singularly troublous. The next two years saw the trial of Hampden for his refusal to pay ship-money, the Edinburgh revolt against the ill-judged attempt to force Episcopacy on Scotland, the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant, and the Scottish invasion of England. In virtue of his connection with the Devonshire family, Hobbes was just now much in the society of the more moderate Royalist leaders, such as Falkland and Hyde, and the result was that early in 1640, about the time of meeting of the Short Parliament, he put aside his wider philosophical schemes for the composition of a little work in support of his fundamental political

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conviction that the anti-social tendencies of human nature are too strong and deep-rooted to be held in check by anything short of an absolute authority, free from all control, such as the English Crown might be made, if released from all dependence on Parliament. The work, which bore the title, *The Elements of Law*, and contains one of the clearest and fullest of Hobbes's expositions of his psychology, was not printed, but circulated in manuscript. Ten years later it was published in an imperfect form as two distinct essays, *Of Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*. It was not until 1889 that the work was printed in its original shape, and with its original title, by Dr. Tönnies. When the Long Parliament met towards the end of the year, and showed its temper by at once proceeding to impeach Strafford, Hobbes's native timorousness got the better of him. Fancying that the author of the *Elements of Law* might be the next victim, he promptly escaped to Paris, not to return for eleven years. In after days he oddly represented this excessive alarm as giving him an exceptional claim on royal gratitude.

His flight brought him back to Paris in the very nick of time. Mersenne was busy, at Descartes' request, in procuring criticisms from learned men

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on the famous *Meditations*, then just about to be published. One such set of criticisms he obtained from Hobbes—those which now figure as the ‘Third Objections’—but they failed to achieve their purpose. Descartes was seeking help from the criticisms of persons in sympathy with his general line of thought. What he got from Hobbes was an attack on his fundamental positions by a thinker of radically different convictions. Hence he treated the ‘Objections’ very curtly, even refusing to admit that they contained a single valid inference, nor was he more favourably impressed by Hobbes’s remarks on the *Dioptrique* published along with the *Discourse on Method* (1637), which were also communicated to him by Mersenne. On the other hand, Hobbes contracted an enduring friendship with another of the lights of Mersenne’s circle, Pierre Gassend, the reviver of Epicureanism.

During 1641 Hobbes recast in Latin his exposition of his psychological and political doctrines the work was printed, in a very limited edition in 1642 under the title *De Cive*, and was highly appreciated even by Descartes. It was reissued five years later from the press of the Elzevirs at Amsterdam as *Elementa Philosophica de Cive*. Hobbes had meanwhile been (1646) appointed

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mathematical tutor to the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles II., who had just come over from Jersey. The engagement cannot have lasted beyond 1648, when the Prince withdrew to Holland, and was possibly ended earlier by a dangerous illness which overtook Hobbes in 1647. In after years he was accustomed to meet doubts as to his religious orthodoxy by an appeal to his acquiescence, during this illness, in the ministrations of Dr. Cosins (afterwards Bishop of Durham).

In 1651 came out an English version of the *De Cive: Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society*. During the same year Hobbes was busy with the composition of the work by which he is now best known to the general student, *Leviathan: or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, which appeared in London at the end of the year. The book consists of a restatement of the general philosophical argument for absolutism, with the addition of a long and bitter polemic against admitting any independent ecclesiastical authority other than the civil sovereign. A specially handsome copy of the MS. was presented to Charles II., now King of Scots, on his return to Paris after the adven-

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turous escape from Worcester. But the Anglican Royalists, who identified the cause of monarchy with the cause of the English Church, were naturally incensed at the author's consistent Erastianism and anti-clericalism, and for a time contrived to keep Hobbes from access to the King. Between this, and his concern as to the way in which the anti-papal doctrines of *Leviathan* might be received by the French clergy, Hobbes once more took alarm, and made his way back to London at the end of 1651, sending in his formal submission to the Council of State shortly after. There was just now, amid the general confusion following on the abolition of the old constitution, no censorship of the press in England to interfere with his publications. Thus it came about that the *Leviathan* could be published in London, and that so much of the great systematic work on philosophy as was ever completed appeared, after all, on English soil.

Among Hobbes's personal friends of this period we have to note the famous Selden, and the still more famous Harvey. With Milton, the chief man of letters among the anti-Royalists, he had no relations, though it is recorded that Milton 'did not like him, but would acknowledge him to be a man of great parts.' Hobbes, for his part,

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declared, comparing Milton's famous *Defence of the People of England* with Salmasius' *Defence of the King*, 'they are very good Latin both, and hardly to be judged, which is better, and both very ill reasoning, hardly to be judged, which is worse.'

Hobbes was now at last, at the age of 64, working on the reasoned exposition of his system. When completed, the scheme was to contain three divisions: (1) of Body, the presentation of the fundamental principles of the new science of motion, and the deduction from them of a doctrine of physics; (2) of Man, a further deduction from the same principles, of human physiology and psychology; (3) of the Body Politic, a deduction of ethics, politics, and sociology from the results reached in the previous sections. Thus the final achievement would have been the deduction of social science as a body of corollaries from the principles of mechanics. From the first, the execution of this plan was delayed by controversies, largely provoked by Hobbes's own mistakes, and the great scheme never reached fulfilment. The first section was, indeed, completed, but the second remained a mere fragment, and the third is represented only by works like the *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, originally composed as independent treatises.

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The *De Corpore*, though in the press in 1654, did not appear until 1655, the reason of the delay being that, during the interval, Hobbes had discovered flaws in the quadrature of the circle which he fancied himself to have found, and of which he had been rather rashly boasting in advance. By the time of publication he had further become implicated in the eternal dispute about the freedom of the will, and the consequence of his double controversy with the mathematicians and the theologians was that, when the *De Homine* at last appeared in 1658, it turned out to contain nothing but a few chapters on optics, along with a brief sketch of elementary psychology. For many years after 1655 Hobbes's career as an author is mainly the history of a series of acrimonious disputes with mathematical and theological opponents.

The theological disputes go back ultimately to the year 1646, when Hobbes had held a verbal discussion with Bramhall, Bishop of Londonderry, and afterwards Archbishop of Armagh, in which he maintained the determinist view of human action against the Arminian and High Anglican doctrine of free will. Both parties had afterwards reduced the substance of their contentions to writing, though with an understanding that

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nothing should be published on either side. In 1654, however, an unknown person who had procured a copy of Hobbes's MS., which contains one of the clearest statements ever made of the argument for determinism, published it under the title *A Discourse concerning Liberty and Necessity*. Bramhall, angered at what he supposed to be the bad faith of Hobbes, replied in 1655 by publishing his own original contribution to the controversy, Hobbes rejoining in the next year with a fresh set of *Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*. The 'questions' were, in turn, attacked by Bramhall in 1658 in a work to which was appended a violent attack on *Leviathan*, facetiously styled *The Catching of Leviathan, the Great Whale*. Hobbes took no notice of this onslaught beyond drawing up, ten years later (1668), a refutation of Bramhall's imputations of impiety, which, like most of his writings of that time, was not published until after his death.

More damaging for Hobbes was his violent quarrel with the Oxford mathematicians, itself an outgrowth of his attacks on the Universities. Like many other persons who have never quite made themselves at home in geometry, Hobbes unluckily conceived the notion that he had solved

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the famous (and insoluble) problems of the quadrature of the circle and the subdivision of the angle into any given number of equal parts. *In palliation of his delusion it may be pleaded that neither problem was definitely known in his day to be insoluble by the methods of elementary geometry. In fact the insolubility of the more famous of the two, that of the quadrature, has only been finally demonstrated in our own time by Lindemann, though a sounder mathematical instinct would, no doubt, have suggested to Hobbes that it probably was not to be solved. His fault lay not so much in attempting to grapple with the problem as in the obstinacy with which he refused to recognise the futility of his results, even when they had been repeatedly exposed by the first mathematicians of the day. A few words must be said as to the history of the quarrel. Hobbes had, in *Leviathan*, made a bitter attack on the Universities, which he regarded as the chief supporters of clerical pretensions, and had particularly enlarged on their ignorance of mathematics and natural science. He did not know, or forgot, that the Oxford of 1651 was a very different place from the Oxford of half a century earlier. The Savilian Professorships had done much to raise the standard of mathematical

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and physical knowledge, and Oxford was already the home of an eager band of scientific workers who were subsequently to form the nucleus of the Royal Society. The resentment of the Oxford men of science against Hobbes's undeserved strictures had already found expression in the *Vindiciæ Academicarum* (1654) of Seth Ward, Savilian Professor of Astronomy, a rejoinder to an attack on the Universities by the Rev. John Webster, also honourably known as one of the first writers against the belief in witchcraft. Ward, however, took only a minor part in the long and angry controversy which followed on the publication of the *De Corpore*, Hobbes's principal assailant being Ward's associate, John Wallis, Savilian Professor of Geometry, the most eminent English mathematician of the generation before Newton. Three months after the issue of the *De Corpore* in 1655 followed Wallis's *Elenchus Geometriæ Hobbianæ*, exposing the fallacies of Hobbes's quadrature, and proving, with the aid of an unbound copy of the work, that his 'solutions,' such as they were, had been repeatedly modified owing to their author's discovery of errors in them after they had been sent to the press. In 1656 there came out an English version of the *De Corpore*, made by Hobbes's instruction, but not from his own hand

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(*Concerning Body*, 1656). Here the 'solutions' were given as mere 'aggressions,' or approximations, but, as a set-off, the book contained an appendix, *Six Lessons* to the Oxford Professors, decrying the whole of Wallis's mathematical work. Wallis rejoined in three months with a *Due Correction for Mr. Hobbes*, which, in its turn, provoked in 1657 an abusive reply from Hobbes, and the inevitable counter-reply from Wallis. In 1660 Hobbes returned to the fray with five Latin dialogues, *Examinatio et Emendatio Mathematicæ Hodiernæ*. Next year he proceeded to bring out a professed solution of the third of the famous ancient problems, the duplication of the cube, which was, as usual, duly refuted by Wallis. In 1662 Hobbes went on to aim a blow at the recently incorporated Royal Society, in which Wallis was a prominent figure, by attacking Boyle's experiments with the air-pump, and endeavouring to show that mere experimentation adds nothing to our insight into nature. Boyle replied with an *Examen of Mr. Hobbes his Dialogus*, and Wallis, with a scathing satire on Hobbes's mathematics, *Hobbius Heauton Timorumenus*. Hobbes wisely left this exposure unanswered, but avenged himself signally upon Wallis's incidental political insinuation against

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him of having favoured Cromwell's usurpation, by a letter *On the Reputation, Loyalty, Manners, and Religion of T. H.*, in which Wallis was reminded of the service he had done to the Parliamentarians by deciphering the papers of Charles I. captured at Naseby. For some years after this the controversy slumbered, but was revived again by Hobbes in 1666. Wallis continued to refute Hobbes's various mathematical papers as they came out until 1672, and then allowed the dispute to drop. Hobbes, for his part, still kept up the game, and even in his latest work *Decameron Physiologicum*, produced when he was over ninety, contrived to insert a new 'demonstration' of the equality of a straight line to an arc of a circle.

Meanwhile, the Restoration had made some change in the philosopher's position. He was met and warmly welcomed by Charles II. a few days after his return to England, encouraged to present himself at Court, had his portrait painted at the king's expense, and received a pension of £100, which, unfortunately, was not always regularly paid. Court favour, however, could only partly protect the author of *Leviathan* from the animosity of the clergy whom he had handled so roughly. In connection with the Bill brought

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into the Commons in 1666, under the influence of the emotions aroused by the Plague and the Great Fire, for the suppression of atheism and profanity, a Committee was appointed to receive informations against atheistical, blasphemous, and profane books, among which *Leviathan* was specified by name. The Bill fell through in the Lords, but Hobbes, who began to fear that he was in personal danger, made, it is said, a show of conformity, and took care, in reprinting *Leviathan* in Latin, to add an appendix intended to show that his doctrines did not formally contradict the Nicene Creed. He even took the trouble to draw up a dissertation on the state of the English law of Heresy, to prove that he could not legally be burned. From this time on, Hobbes only retained Court protection on condition of abstention from all publications on political and religious topics. For the Latin edition of his *Opera Omnia*, which appeared in 1668, he had to find a publisher in Holland, and Pepys records in his diary for September 3rd of the same year that a second-hand copy of *Leviathan* (which had originally come out at 8s.) cost him 24s., and that the price was still rising, as the book could not be reprinted. Similarly a new treatise of the same date, *Behemoth, the History of the Civil Wars*, was pro-

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scribed by the censor. In spite of age and rebuffs, Hobbes still continued to write on a variety of topics, ranging from mathematics to English Law and Church History, and was frequently visited, on account of his fame as a scholar and philosopher, by foreign admirers of learning who found themselves in England.

In 1669 his clerical enemies found a characteristic method of annoying him. Daniel Scargill, a disreputable Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was deprived of his degree and expelled from the University for having publicly maintained theses taken from *Leviathan*. Scargill was persuaded to make an edifying recantation, in which the blame for his loose life was laid on the supposed immoral principles he had imbibed from the books of Hobbes, who, thanks to the censorship, was unable to protest against the imputations. Five years later, Oxford followed suit. Dr. Fell, Dean of Christchurch, and hero of a well-known uncomplimentary epigram, took advantage of his connection with the University Press to strike out of the Latin version of Anthony Wood's *History and Antiquities of Oxford* all the appreciative epithets which the English original had bestowed on Hobbes, and to replace them by terms of abuse.

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Hobbes was this time permitted by the king to publish a letter of remonstrance, but the only effect was to draw from Dr. Fell an outrageous additional note to the book in which Hobbes 'was reviled more coarsely than before. Meanwhile the old man had for a while amused himself by a return to the literary pursuits of his earlier days. In 1672 he composed a succinct account of his life, works, and various controversies in Latin elegiacs, and in 1673 and the year or two following a complete version of the *Iliad and Odyssey* in English rhyme, a sufficiently arduous task for an old man well on towards his ninetieth year. In 1675 he finally left London, residing for the few years of life still left to him alternately at the two Derbyshire seats of the Devonshire family, Chatsworth and Hardwick. His last work, *Decameron Physiologicum*, was, as we have already seen, produced in 1678 at the age of ninety. At the end of the following year, when the family moved, as usual, from Chatsworth to Hardwick for the winter, Hobbes refused to be left behind. But the journey proved too much for his strength, and a few days after reaching Hardwick the old philosopher was struck by paralysis, of which he died on December 4, 1679, at the age of ninety-one years and eight months. The body was laid to rest in

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a modest grave in the parish church of Hault Hucknall, just outside the park gates.

Hobbes's personal appearance is well known to us from various portraits, and from the description of his friend Aubrey. He was tall, erect, and strikingly handsome of face. Though sickly in youth, in manhood and later age he was exceptionally healthy and vigorous, being able even at seventy-five to enjoy an occasional game of tennis. His personal habits were regular, and in later age, abstemious, though, according to Aubrey, he owned to having been drunk about a hundred times in his life, a moderate allowance in those days especially as the good gentleman seems to have regarded occasional drunkenness as medicinal. There is a report of the existence of a natural daughter, for whom he is said to have provided. With respect to his character, there is little to be objected against except his natural timidity, and a certain lack of emotional warmth, which did not, however, prevent him from proving a benefactor to his relatives and a steady and constant friend. In spite of his rather cynical theories of human nature, he appears to have been reasonably charitable to real distress, and it is highly creditable to him, as well as to his protectors, the family of Cavendish, that, having once resolved on the life of a scholar and

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thinker, he avoided all temptations to desert his modest position for the sake of worldly advantage, and that so much care was taken to make that position compatible with his unchecked pursuit of his chosen studies. If we look in vain in his life and writings for any traces of deep spirituality and ethical inwardness, the same thing may be said of Descartes, and, in fact, of most of the eminent thinkers of an exceedingly worldly and unspiritual age. It is not often that we find, as we do in Plato, the combination in one person of intense spiritual earnestness with the faculty of cool and keen rationalistic analysis. Apart from its splendid trust in the competence of the human intellect to discover the truth of things, there is not much in Hobbes's philosophical scheme to arouse the enthusiasm of the young and ardent, and more than a little which is positively repellent. But there are few writers whose work is more fruitful of suggestions for the matured and reflective intellect which has grown suspicious of all enthusiasm, even of its own, and demands before all things calm and impartial reasoned analysis. Perhaps the best proof of Hobbes's real genius is that even his worst errors are so much more instructive than the truths of lesser men.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY, ITS SCOPE AND METHODS

HOBBS'S main influence on the thought both of his own and of subsequent times has been felt almost exclusively in the domain of Ethics and Politics. He is primarily important to us as the herald of a new epoch in English thinking, an epoch which, we might fairly say, was closed only the other day by the death of Herbert Spencer. When we think of him, it is usually as the first in the long succession of English empirical psychologists, the earliest English writer of many who have sought to found a purely naturalistic system of moral and political science on the basis of biological and psychological fact. But it is equally true that Hobbes ends an epoch. He is the last English philosophical writer, with the single exception of Spencer, to understand the word 'philosophy' in the wide sense put upon it in the Middle Ages, as the systematised and codified body of all rational human knowledge. With his

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immediate successor, Locke, begins that distinction between science and philosophy by which the scope of the latter is closely restricted to epistemological inquiries into the conditions and nature of knowledge in general, and psychological investigations into its growth, while the task of extending the contents of our knowledge of the extra-subjective world is made over exclusively to the sciences—a distinction which has ever since, for good and bad, dominated English philosophy. From Hobbes's own point of view, then, his doctrine of Man and Society cannot be fully appreciated unless we consider it, in connection with the rest of his system, as an integral part of that body of deductions from the general laws of motion which constitutes science. For this reason, as well as for the intrinsic value of many of his thoughts on the nature and methods of science, it is essential to examine Hobbes's general theory of the range and the procedure of science before considering his achievements as a theorist in the fields of morals and sociology.

The definition of philosophy, as given at the beginning of the *De Corpore*—our citations are from the English version of 1656—runs thus: 'Philosophy is such knowledge of effects .or appearances as we acquire by true ratiocination'

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from the knowledge we have first of their causes or generations, and, again, of such causes or generations as may be, from knowing first their effects.' Here the words 'by true ratiocination' are intended to exclude from philosophy knowledge directly given in sense perception or resting merely upon unsystematised experience, while the expression 'such causes . . . as *may* be,' in the second clause of the sentence, alludes to Hobbes's view that by reasoning backward from 'effects' to their 'causes,' we can never discover *the* 'cause' of a given 'effect,' but only one or more alternative 'causes' by any one of which the result might have been 'produced.' •

Philosophy then is, in short, reasoned knowledge, and, if we ask why we ought to set a value on such knowledge, Hobbes replies, even more emphatically than Bacon, 'for the sake of its practical consequences.' 'The end of knowledge is power, and the use of theorems . . . is for the construction of problems ; and lastly, the scope of all speculation is the performing of some action, or thing to be done' (*Concerning Body*, i. 6). In particular, the utility of 'moral and civil philosophy' is to be measured by the calamities which arise from ignorance of it. All the avoidable calamities of human life, says Hobbes, with

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characteristic exaggeration, are due to war. And men go to war, not because they wish to do so, or because they do not know that war is productive of evil effects, but because they do not know the true causes of war and peace. That is, they are uninstructed in the true principles of civil and political obedience, which had, in fact, according to Hobbes, been formulated for the first time in 1642 in his own *De Cive*. A true system of Philosophy, in which the principles of morals and politics should be rigorously deduced from the fundamental axioms of science, would therefore act as a universal peacemaker.

Philosophy, then, is sharply distinguished by its reasoned form from history, the mere record of past experience; 'whereas sense and memory are but knowledge of fact, which is a thing past and irrecoverable, science is the knowledge of consequences and dependence of one fact upon another' (*Leviathan*, c. v.). The peculiarity of philosophy or science is that its results are at once universal and exact. 'Experience concludeth nothing universally,' but 'nothing is produced by reasoning aright but general, eternal, and immutable truths.' It is a notable peculiarity of Hobbes's doctrine that, while he agrees with the ordinary empiricist that 'the first beginnings of "

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knowledge are 'the phantasms of sense and imagination,' he almost entirely neglects the problem of inductive logic, *how* 'general eternal and immutable truths' can be educed from these particular isolated 'phantasms.'

From the definition above given, it follows at once that, since philosophy treats only of 'generations' or causal processes, there can be no philosophical knowledge of any being which has no cause, and consequently no philosophy of anything eternal. Hence, there is no science of God, since God is, by definition, an uncaused and eternal being. Theology is thus, at a stroke, excluded from the range of scientific knowledge. Similarly, since all causation is production of one motion by another, there is no science of anything except bodies; the profession of philosophy is 'to search out the properties of bodies from their generation, or their generation from their properties.' Hobbes will not even allow that we can form any intelligible concept of anything incorporeal, and contends that when God is said by the official Anglican theology to be 'without body,' this is a mere vague expression of reverence. In strictness, according to him, there is no definite concept attached to the name 'God,' and it is on this ground that he criticises Descartes' argu-

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ment from my possession of an 'idea of God' to the actual existence of God. Hobbes replies (*Third Objections to the Meditations*), that the inference is worthless, since I have no 'idea' of God at all. All knowledge of God requires revelation, and revelation needs to be accredited by miracles. Since miracles have ceased, a point on which Hobbes agrees with orthodox Protestants, no one can now claim to be heard when he alleges a divine revelation as a reason for disobedience to his civil sovereign. It is our duty to accept the theology promulgated by the State, not because it is true, but because it is official. 'Religion is not philosophy but law.'

Hobbes's general position as to the limits of science is thus closely akin to that which we should nowadays call positivistic. Science extends only so far as the world of bodies moving in accord with fixed mechanical law, and no further. What distinguishes Hobbes from most modern representatives of this view is that he does not combine it, as they do, with the further assertion that the whole of the knowledge thus acquired is merely 'relative,' or concerned solely with 'phenomena,' which are manifestations of an underlying unknown, and perhaps unknowable, reality. That bodies really and objectively exist,

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and that the laws of their motion can be discovered, he simply assumes as an unquestionable fact; he has no inkling of the deeper problem of Descartes' *Meditations*, how it is possible for the individual mind to be assured of anything outside the circle of its own states.

From the definition of philosophy as the knowledge of bodies, the threefold division of the subject at once follows. For bodies are either natural or artificial. Natural bodies, again, include, among others, one class which is of supreme importance, inasmuch as it is the object of all our psychological study of sensation, thought, and emotion, the bodies of human beings. An artificial body is what we commonly call a society or commonwealth. The society or commonwealth is just as much a single body, and governed just as completely by the general laws of the motion of bodies, as the individual organism. Its only distinctive characteristic is that it is artificial; *i.e.* it owes its origin to the voluntary agreement of the persons who form its constituent members. Hence philosophy, as a whole, falls into three parts, the doctrine of body in general, the doctrine of the human body in particular, the doctrine of the artificial body, or commonwealth. 'Two chief kinds of bodies, and very different from one

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another, offer themselves to such as search after their generation and properties; one whereof, being the work of nature, is called a natural body: the other is called a commonwealth, and is made by the wills and agreement of men. And from these spring the two parts of philosophy called Natural and Civil . . . In the first place, therefore (after I have set down such premisses as appertain to the nature of philosophy in general), I will discourse of bodies natural, in the second of the dispositions and manners of men, and in the third of the civil duties of subjects.'—(*Concerning Body*, i. 9.)

By the premisses which appertain to the nature of philosophy in general are meant, of course, the general principles of logic and method, and it is from the account of them that we have to collect Hobbes's views on the theory of knowledge. Scientific method, then, has two branches, reasoning from general principles (definitions and axioms), to their consequences, or, as Hobbes phrases it, from causes to their effects, and this is *synthesis*; reasoning from the facts to the principles involved, from effects to causes, and this is *analysis*. Synthesis and analysis thus correspond to our popular distinction between the deductive and inductive uses of logic. Only the former, the

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purely deductive type of reasoning, is rigidly certain and yields perfectly determinate conclusions. The latter is essentially hypothetical, and consists merely in pointing out such principles as would lead deductively to the observed results. Hence Hobbes, like Epicurus, explicitly maintains that different theories as to the 'cause' of an observed fact may be equally true, if each would equally lead to consequences which agree with observed facts. In modern language, his theory of method makes 'induction' to consist simply in the formation of explanatory hypotheses, apart from the further task of complete verification by showing that any explanation other than that adopted would lead to results which conflict with fact. Like Jevons, he regards 'induction' as being merely the inverse operation corresponding to the direct operation of deduction, as division or integration corresponds to multiplication or differentiation. Hence he held that the Royal Society was proceeding on altogether false lines in attempting to advance physical science by direct experiment rather than by reasoning deductively from preassumed general theories. Hence, too, his uniform silence as to the 'inductive' method of Bacon, the avowed object of which was to eliminate the 'anticipation of nature' by the

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framing of initial hypotheses altogether from the work of science.

Now the ultimate first principles of deductive science are all, according to Hobbes, *definitions*, that is, statements of the meaning of *names*. Everything in science, therefore, turns upon the original definitions; science is merely the correct deduction of the consequences implied in the giving of *names*. And names, Hobbes holds, were originally given arbitrarily. 'For it is true that, *e.g.* man is a living creature, but it is for this reason, that it pleased men to impose both those names on the same thing' (*Concerning Body*, iii. 8).

This point comes out clearly in the famous definition of a name (*Ib.*, ii. 4): 'A name is a word taken at *pleasure* to serve for a mark which may raise in our minds a thought like to some thought we had before, and which, being pronounced to others, may be to them a sign of what thought the speaker had, or had not, before in his mind.' Consistently with this view, Hobbes adopts an ultra-nominalist position in logic. The only names which directly denote realities are singular names of individual bodies; general terms, or common names, do not directly denote an object at all. There is, *e.g.* no such object as 'man in general.' 'This word universal is never

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the name of anything existent in nature, nor of any idea or phantasm formed in the mind, but always the name of some word or name, so that when a living creature, a stone, a spirit, or any other thing is said to be universal, it is not to be understood that any man, stone, etc., ever was or can be universal, but only that these words are universal names, that is, names common to many things' (*Ib.*, ii. 9). A proposition is 'a speech consisting of two names copulated, by which he that speaketh, signifies he conceives the later name to be the name of the same thing whereof the former is the name' (*Ib.*, iii. 2).

Thus Hobbes's doctrine as to the import of propositions is that their whole meaning is that the predicate is a name of the same thing as the subject, or the case of negative propositions, that the subject and predicate are *not* names for the same thing. He is careful, however, to mitigate the extreme nominalism of this account by adding that the use of the copula in English is to make us think of a *reason* why the two names are both given to the same thing. Searching criticism might here find an occasion for attacking Hobbes, out of his own mouth, since this last remark as to the function of the copula clearly sets limits to the alleged arbitrariness of the em-

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ployment, if not to the arbitrariness of the invention, of names.

Reasoning now receives an equally nominalist definition. It is, and the phrase sounds curiously prophetic of the modern discovery that logic is really a mathematical calculus, the computation of the consequences of names, and may be regarded as consisting entirely of *addition* (the formation of complex concepts by putting words together), and *subtraction* (*i.e.* abstraction, the formation of more general concepts by analysis of a complex name into its simpler components), *Concerning Body*, i. 2, 3; iv. 6; *Leviathan*, c. iv.).

Now apart from any minor objections which might be raised as to Hobbes's tacitly implied theory of the way in which language has historically developed, this whole account of the nature of reasoning involves an obvious and tremendous difficulty of principle, a difficulty which meets us again in the doctrine of those modern mathematicians and logicians who regard the written or printed symbols of Arithmetic and Algebra as the actual objects with which mathematical thought is concerned. As we have seen, Hobbes holds that the whole body of the conclusions of deductive science is a mere consequence of the initial definitions (a point on which he was afterwards

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followed by Locke), and, as he is careful to point out, the sense which the introducer of a new word or other symbol is to put upon his invention is a matter of his own choice. The definition, then, being merely a declaration of the sense in which I intend to employ a hitherto unused word or other sign, is, properly speaking, neither true nor false. As Hobbes himself puts it (*Concerning Body*, vi. 15), it is not necessary to dispute whether definitions are to be admitted or no. For when a master is instructing his scholar, if the scholar understand all the parts of the thing defined which are resolved in the definition, and yet will not admit of the definition, 'there needs no further controversy betwixt them, it being all one as if he refused to be taught.' Since all our conclusions, then, are simply logical consequences of arbitrarily constructed definitions, which are themselves neither true nor false, it would seem to follow that the whole of knowledge is a mere ingenious sporting with puzzles, like the solving of chess problems, the ultimate rules of the game being, like the rules of chess, neither true nor false, but purely arbitrary. In what intelligible sense, then, can our conclusions be said to be themselves true?

It is this difficulty which Leibniz has in his

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mind when he urges against the extreme nominalists that though names are *artificial*, they are not *arbitrary*. (For instance, quite different symbols might be chosen to represent the concepts we commonly symbolise by the signs 2, 3, 5, +, =, and in that case the truth we now write in the form $2+3=5$ would be expressed by a very different set of symbols. But the numerical truth meant, or symbolised, by both groups of signs would be one and the same. For every true proposition, expressed in our familiar notation, about relations between numbers, there would be one, and only one, corresponding proposition in the other set of symbols. The particular signs selected to denote the different numbers, and the different operations which can be performed upon them, may be largely arbitrary, but there is nothing arbitrary about the laws of their combination.)

The secret of Hobbes's mistake, in fact, lies in the insidious error into which he falls about the logical character and function of definitions. It is not true, as he supposes, that *e.g.* in Geometry the definitions are the real premisses from which the theorems are inferred. Technically, as Hobbes himself has seen, a definition is a mere verbal abbreviation, a mere substitution of a single

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hitherto unemployed word, or other symbol, for a more complicated set of words or signs of already known import. Hence you could eliminate the definitions from the science altogether by merely replacing every defined symbol in a demonstration by the group of symbols for which, as its definition declares, it is an abbreviation. The only difference such a proceeding would make would be that our demonstrations would be thus rendered painfully long and cumbrous. This is why Hobbes is perfectly correct in holding that a scientific definition is really neither true nor false, since it is, in fact, not a proposition at all, but a mere convention between different thinkers as to the sense to be put on a particular abbreviation. But what Hobbes does not see is that it follows at once from this correct view of the function of definitions, that the definitions are never the premisses from which our scientific demonstrations are inferred. The real premisses of all demonstrations are partly logical axioms, that is assertions which declare that certain propositions imply formally the truth of certain others, partly postulates, or unprovable existence-theorems, that is assertions that certain objects exist, or have a certain relation to one another. An instance of the former kind of premiss in Euclid is the 'first axiom,' which

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states that if the magnitude of a is the same as that of b , and the magnitude of b is the same as that of c , then it follows that the magnitude of a is the same as that of c . Examples of the second kind are the unexpressed postulate that there exists the class of entities called *points*, or the explicitly enunciated postulate of the existence of the straight line (*i.e.* of an entity which is completely determined when two of its points are given). And when we carry our analysis of the presuppositions of demonstrative science far enough we shall always find that just as the ultimate logical axioms are, for the simple reason that they are preconditions of all proof, themselves unprovable, so the ultimate existential postulates, because they are preconditions of all definition, are all assertions of the existence of kinds of entities which are indefinable. Now these ultimate axioms and postulates being thus neither arbitrary, nor mere declarations of the signification of names, we escape the conclusion to which Hobbes's view would lead, that there is, in the end, no sense in asking whether the propositions of science are true or not, and science comes, after all, to be something very different in kind from a curiously complicated chess problem. .

To return, however, to the exposition of Hobbes's

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thought. As we have already seen, Hobbes starts with the assumption, as ultimate scientific postulates, of the fundamental propositions of a rigid mechanical materialism. The only things which we really know to exist are bodies, and bodies are only known to us as vehicles of motion. All the facts of external nature and of mental life must therefore, for science, be varieties of motion in the parts of body, and nothing more. Hence a completed philosophy would amount to a vast system of deductions by which all the truths of physical and mental science would be shown to be logical consequences of the ultimate simple laws of motion laid down by mechanics. From the purely philosophical point of view, it is Hobbes's chief merit that he has undertaken the task of performing such a deduction with greater consistency, and a fuller consciousness of what it implies than any writer before or after him; he is the one consistent philosophical materialist in the history of thought, as far as that history is known to us, whose intelligence rises above mediocrity, and whose candour, at the same time, leaves no doubt as to his exact meaning. Hence it is most instructive, as throwing light upon the inherent defects of materialism as an ultimate philosophical standpoint, to observe at what points his initial

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postulates fail him. Such a failure occurs, with the consequence that Hobbes is forced to abandon his strictly deductive method, at two critical points in his exposition. When he enters upon the realm of our inner mental life in his account of sensation, he has to abandon the attempt to deduce our perception of the various qualities of bodies, their colours, savours, odours, and the like, from a mathematical theory of the external motions which are commonly called their causes or stimuli, and to accept the correlation of the various sense-qualities with certain external stimuli simply as given and unexplained facts of experience. And in the same way, when he advances to the theory of human conduct, he finds it quite out of the question to exhibit the fundamental passions of human nature as movements of particles within the organism mechanically determined by similar movements on the part of external bodies; the fundamental passions, like the simple, sensible qualities of things, have to be treated as unexplained given facts, and the assertion that they are really motions of particles of the body, and nothing more, remains a mere unproved assertion which is of no significance for the further development of Hobbes's ethical scheme. There is thus no real logical connection between Hobbes's meta-

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physical materialism and his ethical and political doctrine of human conduct; the whole of the latter might, in fact, be equally well grafted upon a pronounced spiritualistic metaphysic, such as that of Descartes. Even the rejection of the doctrine of free will is, in point of fact, based upon assumed psychological grounds which in no way involve the metaphysical postulate that all existence is bodily; in short, the only advantage which Hobbes really derives from his materialism is that it furnishes him with a plausible excuse for his refusal to take theology seriously.

Of Hobbes's theory of the passions it will be time enough to speak in the next chapter. But something must be said here of the effect of his materialistic assumptions upon his doctrine of perception. It is an immediate consequence of the postulate that all physical change is motion that the various apparent sensible qualities of external bodies cannot be objectively real. Colours, smells, and the rest must be mere 'appearances' within the percipient of realities, which are, in truth, mere motions of material particles—'All which qualities, called sensible, are in the object that causeth them but so many several motions of the matter, by which it presseth our organs diversely' (*Leviathan*, c. i.). Hobbes

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is thus at one with Galileo and Descartes, and the rest of the founders of modern mechanical science in proclaiming the doctrine of the 'subjectivity' of sensible—or, as Locke named them—secondary qualities. They are not real attributes of external things, but simply effects, produced by the action of external things upon the 'mind' or the 'nervous system' of the percipient. But Hobbes does not stop at this point. As a consistent materialist, he is bound to hold that the mind or nervous system is, like everything else, a body, and consequently that the only effect that can be produced upon it by any external agent is the same kind of effect which one external agent can produce on another, a modification of its previous motions. The sensible quality, *e.g.* a colour, must not merely be a mere subjective effect of external motion, it must itself, as a subjective effect, be a motion, and nothing more. So he adds immediately after the words just quoted, 'Neither in us that are pressed are they anything else but divers motions; (for motion produceth nothing but motion).' Thus we are left to face the paradox that the whole world of perceived sensible qualities is an illusion, while there is not, and on the principles of strict materialism cannot possibly be, any one to be illuded. Colours, tones, smells,

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tastes, have first been declared to be subjective effects produced upon the individual percipient by the impact of particles themselves devoid of all quality; then, since it has to be recognised that, according to materialism, the subject in which these effects are produced must be itself just one collection of such particles among others, it is announced that the effects themselves cannot really be there. If the average materialist stops short of enunciating this intolerable paradox, it is only because he is so far Hobbes's inferior in logical power, or in candour, or in both.

The conception of the subjectivity of sensible qualities is still so commonly regarded as an established result of modern science that it is worth our while to pause over it for a few moments, and to ask whether it can be maintained in a form which does not lead to the Hobbian paradox. Suppose that Hobbes had so far relaxed his materialism as to recognise the real existence of immaterial 'states of consciousness,' might he not have held, without any paradoxical consequences, that what we commonly call the secondary or sensible qualities of external things are in truth 'states of our own consciousness,' which are caused by the action of an external world of bodies totally devoid of

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quality? Such a view was widely current in the ancient philosophical schools, and was revived in Hobbes's own day by Galileo, and Descartes, from the latter of whom it passed as an almost unquestioned axiom into modern science. Yet it is clear, I think, that the doctrine will not bear serious examination. The very ground upon which the sensible qualities are declared to be subjective, to be 'in us' and not 'in the things outside us,' is the assumption that all the processes of the physical world, however various they may seem to be, are in actual fact purely mechanical. If this principle is true, it must hold just as much for the living organism, which, after all, is just one body among others, as for everything else. The effects of a stimulus upon the organism, whatever they may seem to be, must in reality be as entirely mechanical as the stimulus itself, as Hobbes very properly said. Even if a colour or a sound could be said without absurdity to be a 'state of consciousness,' the principles of a mechanical philosophy would absolutely forbid our calling that state an 'effect' of an external stimulus. The 'effect' of the stimulus would have to be simply the *ex hypothesi* purely mechanical changes induced by it in the nervous system, and with these changes the

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'state of consciousness' would have really no discoverable relation but the temporal relation of simultaneity. The whole of our intellectual life would become, as it has sometimes been called, an 'epiphenomenon,' a series of events occurring simultaneously with certain mechanical changes in the world of bodies, but standing absolutely outside the series of causes and effects.

And, if we carried analysis a step further, we should at once be confronted by a still more formidable difficulty. For it would readily become apparent that, whatever sensible qualities may be, they are certainly not 'states' of a mind. When, in common parlance, I am said to see a blue flower, it is really ridiculous to say that in truth it is my mind which is blue. My judgment 'that flower is blue' may be true, or it may be false, but in either case one thing is quite clear. It is not 'being blue,' but 'believing that the flower is blue' which is, in that moment, a state of my perceiving mind. And this simple reflection is in itself enough to dispose of the whole doctrine of the 'subjectivity of sensible qualities.' There are really only two alternative possibilities in the case. Either all the propositions in which a sensible quality is ascribed to a thing are merely false, as Hobbes's account logically implies, or

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else there are at least some bodies which really have the sensible qualities of colour, savour, and so forth. It would be no way of escape to suggest that perhaps what is really blue is neither the flower nor my mind, but some part of my optical apparatus, *e.g.* the stimulated region of my retina. For, on such a theory, there is at least one body which really has the sensible quality, viz. my retina. But, if so, why not other bodies as well, and what becomes of the postulate that the only objectively real properties of body are mechanical?

The fact is that Hobbes, like all the philosophers who have taught the subjectivity of sensible qualities, commits the grave error of trying to combine two really inconsistent conceptions of the relation between the external world and our perception. He tries to think of the world of bodies as being at once the *cause* of perception, and also the *object* which perception apprehends. What our last two paragraphs have gone to show is that both these conceptions cannot be true at once. If the external world is the cause of perception, it cannot be the object apprehended in perception; in fact, perception, in that case, can have no object at all, and all supposed knowledge about anything must be a mere illusion, as was pretty clearly seen by Hume.

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On the other hand, since the external world is certainly the object of our perception (how far that perception is correct or erroneous makes no difference to the argument), the relation of the world to the perceiving subject cannot possibly be a causal one. When we have once grasped this truth, we shall see that the accuracy of our perception of sensible qualities of body is a question to be argued, in every special case, on its own merits, and cannot be impugned by any general *à priori* arguments drawn from the principle of causality. Nor does this conclusion in any way conflict with the fullest recognition of the right of physical science to treat the external world, for its own purposes, as if it were devoid of sensible qualities, and consisted merely, let us say, of vibratory motions of different rates of frequency. All that is required to justify such a proceeding is that there should be a uniform one-to-one correlation between each sensible quality (*e.g.* each shade of colour), and a particular kind of vibration; we may then treat the colour, for all purposes of mathematical physics, as if it actually were the vibration, just as, in ordinary analytical geometry, we can treat a point in a plane as if it were actually a couple of numbers. Where the physicist so often goes

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wrong, when he strays into the domain of philosophy, is in hastily assuming that two things which have a one-one correspondence to each other are really the same thing. As for the further *à posteriori* arguments by which Hobbes tries to establish the subjectivity of sense-qualities, *e.g.* in the first chapter of *Leviathan*, they are all of the type since made familiar by Berkeley and his followers (appeals to dreams, to hallucinations, 'etc.). Their conclusive force, whatever it may be, would be equally great if we applied them to the 'primary' mechanical properties of body, or even to Hobbes's supreme reality, motion itself, since all these may be the subject of dreams and hallucinations, just as colours or smells might be. In truth, all that is proved by arguments of this type would seem to be that it is possible to make erroneous judgments about external things, a proposition which no sober philosophy is called on to deny.

In one respect Hobbes goes beyond most of the English writers who have since espoused the doctrine that sensible qualities are subjective; he maintains the same thing about space and time themselves. They also are merely 'phantasms,' that is, they are not 'the accident or affection of any body'; they are 'not in the things without us,'

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but only in the thought of the mind' (*Concerning Body*, vii. 3). More precisely, space is 'the phantasm of a thing existing without the mind simply; that is to say, that phantasm in which we consider no other accident, but only that it appears without us'; time is 'the phantasm of before and after in motion' (*Ibid.*, vii. 2, 3). The ground given by Hobbes for this assertion is that if the whole world could be suddenly annihilated except one man, that man would still retain his consciousness of space and time. I confess I do not see that this consideration proves anything, except perhaps that space and time are not bodies, nor do I see how Hobbes could think that motion (the successive occupation of different positions by the same thing), is objectively real, and yet hold that space and time are mere subjective ideas of our own. His statement, it should be noted, bears no real resemblance to Kant's famous doctrine of the 'ideality' of the forms of perception. Space and time are regarded by him not as universal forms of perception impressed by the mind upon a 'manifold' of sensations received from without, but merely as constituent elements of the 'manifold' itself. The whole distinction between a formal element in perception, which comes from the perceiving subject, and a material element

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contributed by the external world, belongs to a later and more developed stage of the theory of knowledge. It is, indeed, a signal advance upon the Kantian position to recognise clearly that the 'formal' element in perception is no less objective than the 'material,' but the recognition seems inconsistent with sensationalism as a theory of knowledge. Hobbes is able to be consistently sensationalist precisely because it does not occur to him to draw any distinction between the 'formal' and the 'material' in our knowledge.

CHAPTER III

EMPIRICAL PSYCHOLOGY—THE NATURE OF MAN

WE may now proceed to consider the main outlines of the analysis of cognition and volition which has earned for Hobbes the well-merited title of 'founder of empirical psychology,' that chief contribution of the English-speaking peoples to mental science. This analysis will be found by the English reader most fully set forth in two works, the *Human Nature* (the first part of the treatise on the *Elements of Law* originally composed in 1640), and the opening chapters of *Leviathan* (published in 1651). We must bear in mind, however, that Hobbes is chiefly interested in the psychology of the individual mind less for its own sake than because it furnishes him with a logical foundation for his naturalistic doctrine of ethics and politics; his psychology is consequently only worked out so far as is necessary for the achievement of this ulterior end.

Hobbes, as we have seen, does not attempt to

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deduce the principles of psychology, let alone these of ethics and politics, from the general doctrine of motion, but falls back upon our immediate experience of the main facts of human nature as we find them in ourselves. He is, so to say, an empiricist *malgré lui*, and it is one of the entertaining ironies of history that the English philosopher who, of all others, is most strongly insistent upon the deductive character of genuine science should be chiefly remembered by that part of his work which is most flagrantly inconsistent with his own conception of strictly scientific method. From the axiom that neither within nor without is there any reality but motion there is, in truth, no road to moral and political science.

Hobbes starts, in his doctrine of man, from the usual empiricist assumption that all mental life is a development from beginnings in *sensation*; 'for there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not, at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original' (*Leviathan*, c. i.). Sensation, as we have seen, is, according to him, a motion caused in these organs by previous motion in some external body. Why the sensible qualities, thus begotten, are supposed to belong to external bodies he explains by the theory that all

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sensation gives rise to motor reaction from the heart, which he, like the Aristotelians, regards as the centre of the nervous system, towards the periphery of the body. It is the outward-flowing direction of these reactions which causes sensible objects to appear *without* us,—a crude version of the now seriously discredited doctrine of ‘feelings of innervation.’ He immediately adds a doctrine of the *relativity* of sensation. Sensation requires a constant variety of stimuli; persistent exposure to an unvarying stimulus would readily give rise to total unconsciousness, ‘it being almost one for a man to be always sensible of one and the same thing and not to be sensible at all of anything’ (*Concerning Body*, xxv. 5). That is, consciousness depends upon *contrast*. From sensation Hobbes goes on next to derive imagination and memory. Imagination is simply ‘decaying sense,’ *i.e.* the persistence, in a less intense form, of the organic process excited by a stimulus after the stimulus itself has been withdrawn. This persistence itself, again, is a consequence of what Newton was afterwards to call the ‘first law of motion.’ ‘When a body is once in motion, it moveth (unless something else hinder it) eternally, and whatsoever hindereth it, cannot in an instant, but in time, and by degrees quite extinguish it. And as we see in the

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water, though the winds cease, the waves give not over rolling for a long time after; so also it happeneth in that motion which is made in the internal parts of a man, then, when he sees, dreams, etc. For after the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. . . . Imagination therefore is nothing but *decaying sense* (*Leviathan*, c. ii.). How, in the general subjectivity of all sensation, we are to know whether the 'object' has really been 'withdrawn' or not is a problem which Hobbes would scarcely have found it easy to solve. Memory is now explained to be simply imagination of what is past. 'When we would express the decay, and signify that the sense is fading, old, and past, it is called *Memory*. So that imagination and memory are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath divers names' (*Ib.*).

It is clear that we are here again confronted by a difficulty which Hobbes's superficial appeals to physical analogies cannot conceal. For imagination is by no means exclusively of things past; we can imagine our future as readily as we can remember our past, and we often divert ourselves by imagining a state of things which neither has existed nor will ever exist. Now how do we

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come to make these distinctions between different imaginations if imagination and memory are merely two names for the same thing looked at from two different points of view? Why is not all imagination indistinguishable from reminiscence? In other words, what a psychological analysis of memory ought to account for is not the mere fact that we can imagine what is actually past, but the fact that, in doing so, we recognise the events imagined as belonging to the past and not to the future or to no time at all. The secret of Hobbes's failure to give any satisfactory account of memory is not hard to find, and it is also the secret of much more that is defective in his psychological analysis. What must happen to any really consistent sensationalist in psychology has happened to him. In his derivation of mental life from passively received sensations he has forgotten the presence of selective attention as an ever-present factor which actively determines the course of all mental processes. It is only when we have learned to distinguish that from which attention is turning away from that towards which it is moving that we acquire a basis for the distinction between imagination of what is 'no longer' and imagination of what is 'not yet.'

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Hobbes next advances to the analysis of complex trains of thought (*Leviathan*, c. iii.). He begins by laying down the general doctrine of 'association of ideas,' giving a crude account of the psycho-physical dependence of the process upon the formation of 'paths of conduction' in the nervous system, and recognising 'association by contiguity' more explicitly than 'association by resemblance,' though the latter is not entirely overlooked. 'When a man thinketh on anything whatsoever, his next thought after is not altogether so casual as it seems to be. Not every thought to every thought succeeds indifferently. But . . . we have no transition from one imagination to another whereof we never had the like before in our senses. The reason whereof is this. All fancies are motions within us, relics of those made in the sense; and those motions that immediately succeeded one another in the sense continue also together after sense, insomuch as the former coming again to take place and be predominant, the later followeth by coherence of the matter moved.' He distinguishes, however, between mere random association and thought guided or regulated by the presence of a definite end or purpose which controls the formation of associations, *e.g.* the orderly thinking out of a series of steps towards

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the gratification of a given desire. This latter ought really to present a difficulty to him, since it most obviously involves the presence of purposive attention as actively determining the current of thought, and leading to sequences in 'imagination' quite independent of previous sequences 'in our senses,' and it seems manifest that such attention cannot be analysed into a mere succession of subjective effects of physical stimuli. On Hobbes's theory,* as on any theory which treats association as more than a subordinate factor in determining the course of thought, whenever we think of a given thing *A*, our next thought should be of a thing *B*, which is either very like *A* or has been most commonly perceived or thought of in close connection with *A*. In actual fact, in proportion as our thinking is truly rational, or, as Hobbes would say, regulated, the *B* which the thought of *A* calls up is that which it is most *relevant* to our present object to think of next, and this *B* may be something quite unlike *A* and something which has never been thought of in this particular connection with *A* before. It is really only unregulated, random thinking which is dominated by association; in an orderly train of purposive thinking association appears, as often as

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not, as a disturbing factor and 'source of pure irrelevance.

Hobbes now proceeds (*Leviathan*, c. vi.) to a similar analysis of voluntary motions, *i.e.* the whole conative side of mental life. Like most pre-Kantian psychologists he reckons feeling and emotion among the forms of conation. Conation is, in every case, nothing but incipient motion within the nervous system, and such incipient outward-directed reaction Hobbes calls by the general name *endeavour*. Endeavour, again, has two contrasted directions. It is either endeavour *to* or *from* a perceived object, the words 'to' and 'from' being understood quite literally of direction in space. Endeavour towards an object is what we call *appetite* or *desire*; endeavour from an object is called *aversion*. Other names for the two directions of endeavour are love and hate. 'Because going, speaking, and the like voluntary motions depend always upon a precedent thought of *whither*, *which way*, and *what*, it is evident that the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motions. And although unstudied men do not conceive any motion at all to be there, where the thing moved is invisible, or the space it is moved in is (for the 'shortness of it) insensible; yet that doth not hinder but"

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that such motions are. . . . These small beginnings . of motion, within the body of man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking, and other visible actions, are commonly called ENDEAVOUR. This endeavour, when it is toward something which causes it, is called APPETITE, or DESIRE; . . . and when the endeavour is fromward something, it is generally called AVERSION. . . . That which men desire, they are also said to LOVE, and to HATE those things for which they have aversion. So that desire and love are the same thing; save that by desire we always signify the absence of the object, by love most commonly the presence of the same. So also by aversion we signify the absence, and by hate the presence, of the object' (*Ib.*, c. vi.).

Whatever is the object of appetite or desire to a man he calls *good*; whatever is the object of aversion he calls *evil*. Hence, since the desires of different men, and even of the same man at different times, are very various, *good* and *evil* are purely relative terms, and there can be no common measure of them, except in civil society, where they are determined by the command of the ruler; hence, again, the absolute necessity for the civil sovereign and his laws, if moral anarchy, is to be avoided. 'These words . . . are ever

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used with relation to the person that useth them; there being nothing simply and absolutely so, nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves, but from the person of the man (when there is no commonwealth), or (in a commonwealth) from the person that representeth it, or from an arbitrator or judge, whom men disagreeing shall by consent set up, and make his sentence the rule thereof' (*Leviathan*, c. vi.). In other words, there is no such thing as a moral law, equally binding upon all persons, except in an organised political community, and in such a community itself what we call the 'moral' law is a consequence, a reflex in the consciousness of the individual man, of the habit of obedience to the commands of a political ruler.

It follows from this purely naturalistic conception of the primary meaning of the words 'good' and 'evil,' that 'of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some good to himself' (*Ib.*, c. xiv.). The proposition is, in fact, tautologous, since, according to Hobbes's definition of good, good means what a man desires, and, as we are to see immediately, his psychology is unable to draw any real distinction 'between desire, or 'appetite,' and volition. Thus, on the

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ground that 'the object of a man's desire is the object of his desire,' Hobbes bases the conclusion that all voluntary action is, in the last resort, purely egoistic, though it appears that the 'good' at which an action aims may, in some cases, be the suppression of the pain we feel at the sight of another person's suffering, and room is thus made for a limited and rather inferior kind of benevolence. It should further be noted that Hobbes oddly confounds pleasure and pain with the consciousness of appetite and of aversion respectively, a gross blunder in analysis which is forced on him by the necessity of bringing all features of our mental life under one of the two heads, cognition and motor impulse. Similarly, he is obliged to falsify his analysis of deliberation and volition. Deliberation is nothing more than a succession of alternating impulses or appetites towards and from the same object. 'When in the mind of man appetites and aversions, hopes and fears, concerning one and the same thing arise alternately, and divers good and evil consequences of the doing or omitting the thing propounded come successively into our thoughts, so that sometimes we have an appetite towards it, sometimes an aversion from it . . . the whole sum of desires, aversions, hopes, and fears con-

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tinued till the thing be either done, or thought impossible, is that we call DELIBERATION' (*Leviathan*, c. vi.). It follows, of course, that deliberation is no prerogative of man, but common to him with the 'brutes.' *Will* is simply the last member of this series, the appetite or aversion which immediately precedes the visible bodily reaction. 'The last appetite or aversion immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the *Will* . . . and beasts, that have deliberation, must necessarily also have will' (*Ib.*).

From the definition of good and evil, it follows that Hobbes adopts a purely and crudely determinist view on the question of free will. A man inevitably aims at that which at the moment appears good to himself; in fact all that we mean by saying that it appears good to him is that he does so aim at it. Hobbes's essay on Liberty and Necessity still remains one of the clearest and most forcible statements of the case for this kind of rigid determinism against any admission of contingency or genuine freedom in human action.

This whole theory of volition obviously suffers from grave psychological defects, which, in their turn, lead to equally grave ethical and sociological errors. The secret source of Hobbes's worst

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mistakes in ethical theory must be sought in the absurd inadequacy of his analysis of deliberation. From the standpoint of a really thorough psychology, nothing can be more ludicrous than his confusion of rational deliberation with a mere see-saw of conflicting animal impulses. Rational deliberation, as distinguished from mere hesitation, implies the successive examination of alternative possibilities of action with a preconceived plan or purpose which is already fixed in its main outlines, but receives further special determination as to its details by each of these successive comparisons; the final selection of one of the alternatives as the line to be followed is an act totally different in its psychological character from the blind translation into overt movement of an irrational impulse. Hence it is that we can actually desire what we do not will, and will much that we do not desire. Thus we find in Hobbes's account of volition precisely the same blindness to the importance of selective attention which we had found in his analysis of cognition. This has a further most momentous consequence for his ethical and social doctrine. From the identification of volition with mere animal appetite it follows that civilisation can provide us with no new *objects* of volition, it can merely increase our

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command over the means of gratifying desires which remain identical with those of the savage, or supply additional motives, such as, *e.g.* fear of the police or the gallows, strong enough to check the gratification of such desires. We are all still savages at heart, though we are better informed than the savage as to the probable consequences of gratifying our appetites, and have also contrived to attach artificially various new unpleasant consequences to the gratification of some of them. Not, of course, that Hobbes was himself ethically on the level of a savage; the acquisition of a rational comprehension of life to which Hobbes's labours were so unremittingly devoted, is itself an object of desire impossible to a mere savage, but for such objects his crude psychological analysis has provided no place. It is a direct consequence of this analysis, and at the same time the real foundation of his whole moral and social theory, that competition for objects of desire which can only be enjoyed by one man on the condition that all others are prevented from enjoying them, is still, as it always has been, the law of human life, and that this competition will always make ordered society impossible unless there is a ruler with the admitted right to set limits to it and the power to enforce his regula-

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tions by penalties. However strongly some of the facts of the period of revolution through which England was passing during Hobbes's manhood might suggest such a conception, it should be manifest to a dispassionate student of human history that it does infinitely less than justice to the extent to which, as civilisation advances, the objects of human desire become more and more of a non-competitive kind, or of a kind which are positively unattainable by one man except on the condition of their equal attainment by his fellows.

Hobbes develops these portentous ethical consequences of his psychology in much detail in the eleventh and thirteenth chapters of *Leviathan*. The supreme aim of every man is to obtain power, i.e. an assured command over the means of future gratification of desire, the reason why this passion persists so obstinately throughout life being not so much that man is never content with the degree of satisfaction he has already attained, as the uncertainty whether he will continue to retain it undiminished. 'In the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death. And the cause, of this is not always that a man hopes for a more

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intensive delight, . . . or that he cannot be content with a moderate power, but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well which he hath present without the acquisition of more.' (*Leviathan* c. xi.)

Now Hobbes also holds that there is no great natural difference between one man and another either in physical or mental capacity: 'As to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself. And as to the faculties of the mind . . . I find yet a greater equality amongst men than that of strength.' (*Ib.*, c. xiii.). Consequently, the natural state of man, *i.e.* the condition into which he is born and in which he remains, so far as he does not artificially put an end to it by the creation of a political system, is one of universal competition, or as Hobbes, who likes to give his ideas the most startling and provocative wording, phrases it, one of 'war of every man against every man,' in which there is no moral law, since the recognition of moral law is only possible among men living in civil society, and respecting their mutual rights and duties. 'To this war of every man against every man this also is consequent, that nothing

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can be unjust. 'The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. . . . It is consequent also to the same condition that there be no propriety (*i.e. property*), no dominion, no mine and thine distinct, but only that to be every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can get keep it' (*Ib.*). This state of universal anarchy, we must remember, is not in the least Hobbes's ideal, as it has sometimes been falsely represented to be by unscrupulous controversialists; on the contrary, he abhors it, and is at great pains to point out its horrors. So long as it lasts, there can be no settled industry or commerce, no science, no arts or letters, 'and, which is worst of all, continuous fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' (*Ib.*). The salvation of man, in fact, as we shall see, depends on the fact that though nature has placed him in so evil a condition, she has also endowed him with 'a possibility to come out of it.' Whatever we may think of Hobbes's analysis of human nature, it must not be forgotten for a moment that its object is not the repudiation of law and morality,

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but the vindication of them as the only safeguards against general anarchy and misery.

In proof of the correctness of the dark picture thus drawn of what human life would be without a firmly established political authority to protect men against one another and against their own anti-social appetites, Hobbes appeals (1) to the actual condition of savages; (2) to the absence of all moral restraint shown in the mutual relations of independent states, who have no common superior, towards each other; and (3), with special reference to the calumniators who charged him with a desire to undermine the authority of the existing moral law, to the precautions which men take against one another even in settled and civilised states. He thus fairly retorts that he only puts into words what is implied in the conduct of his critics themselves when they bar their chests, lock their doors, or carry arms when on a journey.

Hobbes's account of the 'state of nature' is, of course, as is shown in particular by the seventeenth chapter of *Leviathan*, expressly intended to contradict the doctrine of Aristotle, revived and made popular in his own time by the famous work of Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, that man is 'naturally a political animal,' i.e. that the rudiments of sociability and social organisation are

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never absent from any group of human beings living together. This implies, contrary to Hobbes's psychological analysis, that human impulses are *not* exclusively egoistic. So Hobbes reverts to a notion ultimately derived from the old Greek sophists, who taught that morality is the result of 'convention,' the notion that mankind originally existed in a 'state of nature,' which was one of sheer lawlessness, and that all settled morality is the result of habituation to obedience to political rules, which must have been originally set up by voluntary agreement or contract. It is easy to point out that Hobbes exaggerates the extent to which morality is a mere effect of civil obedience, and to show, in the light of later research, that even savages, who have no settled political organisation, really possess a rudimentary morality based on traditional tribal *custom*. It is equally true that he exaggerates the defects even of the seventeenth century, when he maintains that independent nations recognise *no* moral restrictions whatever in their dealings with their neighbours. Yet his reflections on the character of international morality, as well as on the precautions taken even by the citizen of a law-abiding community against his fellows, retain even to-day a great deal of unpleasant significance. We are, after all, in

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many things nearer the savage than we like to think, and it is well that we should not be allowed to forget the fact.

And it is, at least, an important part of the truth, that our moral codes are too largely merely the effect of unreasoned acquiescence in long established custom, while there can be no doubt that Hobbes is much nearer the truth than the sentimental writers before and after him, who have glorified the relatively lawless condition of the pre-civilised man as a golden age of superior innocence or virtue. And there is an element of truth in Hobbes's polemic against Aristotle's conception of the way in which the family has widened into the village community, and the village community into the city or nation, by a process of peaceful expansion. We know enough now of the steps by which historical Greece came into existence to be sure that what lay behind the formation of the Greek *polis* was, more often than not, invasion, conquest, massacre, and the anarchy produced by the violent subversion of older settled 'morality.' If we abandon the empty dream of ever discovering historical information as to the 'primitive' condition of mankind, and content ourselves with the more modest question, What state of things preceded the growth of that

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which we call Western civilisation, whether Hellenic or Germanic, we shall find that Hobbes has, after all, given us a large part, though not the whole, of the truth, especially if we take his picture, with his own qualifying remark that 'it was never generally so all over the world,' and that his prime purpose is not to write ancient history, but to show by philosophical analysis 'what manner of life there would be where there were no common power to fear, by the manner of life which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government use to degenerate into a civil war' (*Leviathan*, c. xiii.).

CHAPTER IV

THE MAKING OF THE LEVIATHAN

WE have seen, in the last chapter, what is Hobbes's conception of the 'state of nature,' the condition in which man found himself at the dawn of civilisation, and into which he tends to degenerate when the bonds of political allegiance are gravely relaxed. It is a condition in which the machinery provided by government for the restraint of men's fundamentally anti-social impulses is entirely absent, and in which there is nothing to take its place. How, then, could any number of men ever pass out of this state of anarchy into a state of settled order? Hobbes replies that there is a possibility to escape from the state of nature into one of civil society which is founded partly on men's passions, partly on men's reason. Partly on their passions, since among these there are several which make for peace and orderly existence, such as 'fear' of death, desire of such things as are necessary to com-

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modious living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them.' (*Leviathan*, c. xiii.) Partly on reason, since it is reason which suggests to mankind the proper means of securing gratification for these unbellicose passions, or as Hobbes puts it, 'suggesteth convenient articles of peace upon which men may be drawn to agreement' (*Ib.*). We might, perhaps, ask how men living by the unregulated promptings of egoistic appetite ever come to listen to these 'suggestions' of reason, but here, too, Hobbes is ready with an answer. We, all of us, he says, have our calmer moments when rational reflection is undisturbed by passion, and it is then that the voice which suggests 'articles of peace' makes itself heard.

Like the great majority of the political theorists from Hooker in the sixteenth century to Rousseau in the eighteenth, Hobbes thus assumes that the transition from savagery to civil society must have begun with an express agreement or contract, the so-called 'social compact.' Hence with him, as with the others, it becomes the first object of political theory to discover the terms of this original contract—the 'articles of peace' already mentioned—since it is by these terms that we have to ascertain the limits of the rightful authority of political rulers. The ruler is legiti-

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mately entitled to just so much authority over his subjects, and no more, as can be logically deduced from the examination of the terms of the contract by which civil subjection was first instituted. Whatever in the practice of actual rulers is not covered by these terms is usurpation. This method of deducing the rights of a government over its subjects from a supposed original contract, which had, in point of fact, come down to the thinkers of the sixteenth century from the mediæval legists and schoolmen, who were seeking a rational basis for their various theories of the division of power between the Pope and the secular authorities, or between the Pope and the general councils, received its death-blow towards the end of the eighteenth century from Bentham and Burke, both of whom insist, in different ways, that the rights of governments must be based on the actual needs of society, and not on any theory of the primitive rights of man. Bentham's arguments, which will be found in his *Fragment on Government*, are mainly directed against Blackstone's attempt to determine the rights of the British Crown by deductions from the compact between king and people supposed to be made in the coronation oath, 'Burke's, against the onslaught of the French Revolution,

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acting in the name of the 'rights of man' upon the vested interests, which he chooses to regard as established, 'rights,' of the nobility and clergy. In the nineteenth century, the growth of historical research into social origins made the conception of government as having arisen at a definite time by means of a definite voluntary compact even more unreal, by revealing the enormous extent to which definite political institutions have arisen out of an earlier stage of 'customary' law. Indeed, when we look the matter squarely in the face, it becomes evident that free association by voluntary agreement belongs to the culmination rather than to the beginnings of civilisation, and that the recognition of the binding force of such agreements presupposes the existence of a highly organised public opinion against their violation, so that contract depends upon society more than society upon contract. It is therefore quite impossible for us to take Hobbes's account of the compact by which savagery is ended and civilised life begun as serious historical fact. Yet it is possible to suspect that the reaction against theories of the origin of government in contract may perhaps have been carried too far even on the historical side. History itself, at least, gives us reason to believe that many a famous community

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has sprung from combinations of 'broken men,' relics, in a period of general disintegration, from many distinct ruined tribes or cities, who have somehow been thrown together and entered into a new alliance among themselves, and in such cases the new community must clearly have rested upon the voluntary agreement to unite in mutual support. But, in any case, the substance of Hobbes's reasoned plea for absolutism is quite independent of the largely mythical form in which it is clothed by the author. However governments originate, it is at least true that their permanency depends upon the recognition by governors and governed alike of certain general principles defining the functions of the governor and the obligations of the governed, and such recognition may not unsuitably be represented to the imagination as an implicit bargain. These principles Hobbes and the seventeenth century publicists in general call by a name borrowed from the Roman lawyers, who in their turn had borrowed it from the Stoic philosophers, the 'laws of nature,' the curious result of this appeal to the terminology of the Roman jurists being that, in effect, the theorists of the 'social contract' contrive to apply to political institutions of a very un-Roman character the doctrines of the Roman

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law of corporations. There is, of course, no inconsistency between the phrase 'laws of nature' and Hobbes's doctrine that a law, in the sense of a command by a superior, is impossible until the creation of a public authority to give the command, since Hobbes is careful to explain that 'laws of nature' are not commands, but 'rules of reason,' true universal propositions as to the conditions upon which settled wellbeing is obtainable. They are laws in the sense in which we apply the name to the principle of Excluded Middle or to that of the syllogism, not in the sense in which it is given to the Statute of Mortmain or the British North America Act: 'A law of nature (*lex naturalis*), is a precept, or general rule found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that by which he thinketh it may best be preserved' (*Leviathan*, c. xiv.). Hobbes's employment of the word 'forbidden' in this sentence is, of course, metaphorical. His meaning is simply that since every man desires to live, reflection shows us that it would be irrational to endanger our lives or to fail to protect them. It is in this, and not in any mere idealistic sense, that we have to understand the declaration, in

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the first chapter of the *De Corpore Politico*, that the law of nature is identical with reason. It is not that reason is thought of as supplying us with ends of action: the ends of action are already given by the fundamental brute passions and appetites. What reason does is to indicate general rules as to the means by which such foregone ends may be most certainly obtained.

Of such 'general rules found out by reason,' there are, according to Hobbes, a considerable number, but all are deducible from a single supreme rule, 'that every man ought to endeavour peace as far as he has hope of obtaining it, and where he cannot obtain it, that he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war. The first branch of which rule containeth the first and fundamental law of nature, which is *to seek peace and follow it*; the second the sum of the *right of nature*; which is, *by all means we can to defend ourselves*' (*Leviathan*, c. xiv.). (Of course, by saying that we 'ought' to seek peace, Hobbes means no more than that, in virtue of the hazards and dangers of the 'war of all against all,' it is manifestly to our advantage to do so where we can.) An immediate corollary, which figures as the second law of nature, is that each of us should

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be willing, when the rest are equally willing, to abandon the general claim to act exactly as he thinks fit, so far as the renunciation is necessary for peace; 'that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself' (*Ib.*) Briefly, then, the second law is 'do not to others what you are not prepared to allow them to do to you,' a precept which Hobbes, characteristically enough, confuses with the 'golden rule' of the Gospel. It is upon this rule that the whole possibility of contract, and, consequently, according to Hobbes, of political society, depends. For what the rule provides for is the laying aside by each member of a body of men of some part of his original right, as described in the first of Hobbes's 'rules of reason,' to act exactly as he thinks fit. Now rights laid aside are either merely renounced, or, when they are resigned for the benefit of an expressly designated person or persons, *transferred* to that person or persons. Such transference, being a voluntary act, is necessarily interested, since the object of every voluntary act is some good to myself. The contracting

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parties, then, in every case, act each with a view to his own ultimate advantage. Also, since there are certain things for the surrender of which no man can receive an equivalent, there are things which cannot be made the subjects of contract, rights which cannot be transferred. A man cannot *e.g.* divest himself of the right to resist an assault upon his life, or an attempt to wound or imprison him. More generally, since the whole object of a transference of rights is to obtain an increased security of life and the means of enjoying life, no act or word of mine can reasonably be interpreted as showing an intention of divesting myself of the means of self-preservation. These considerations will meet us again as furnishing some limits even to the power of the sovereign.

Hobbes now proceeds to deduce from this second law a third, which is the immediate foundation of the rest of his social theory. When two parties make a bargain for their mutual advantage, it frequently happens that one of them is called upon to perform his part of the contract first and to trust the other to discharge his part at some future time. In this case the contract is called, from the point of view of the second party, a *covenant*. From the second law

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of nature we can then deduce a third, which Hobbes treats as the foundation of all moral obligation, 'that men perform their covenants made' (*Leviathan*, c. xv.). This follows, because if I break my agreement with you, then, since your object in the original agreement was to secure some good to yourself, and my failure to perform what I undertook has frustrated that object, you have no longer any inducement to fulfil your part of the bargain. Thus the whole purpose of making covenants has been defeated; 'covenants are in vain, and but empty words, and, the right of all men to all things remaining, we are still in the condition of war' (*Ib.*). On this law of the sacredness of a covenant depends the distinction of justice from injustice, and, indirectly, the whole of social morality, since 'the definition of injustice is no other than the not performance of covenant. And whatsoever is not unjust is just.' (*Ib.* Note, incidentally, that Hobbes thus, like Schopenhauer, treats wrongdoing as a concept logically prior to right-doing.) This definition explains what Hobbes had meant by saying that in 'a state of nature' there can be no injustice. Injustice is breach of covenant, but the mutual trust upon which the making of covenants depends, is only possible when there

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is a coercive power which can affect breaches of covenant with penalties severe enough to make it to my interest to abstain from them, *i.e.* under a civil government. For the same reason it is only under civil government that there can be property. It is a natural question why, if the motive for loyalty to my agreements is always some prospect of advantage to myself, I should be morally bound to keep them in cases where treachery promises to be still more advantageous. The fact of the obligation Hobbes does not dispute; he even maintains expressly that a promise to a brigand to pay a certain sum on condition of being released is binding unless declared invalid by a properly constituted court of law; but he is not altogether successful in the reasoning by which he supports his view. Partly he replies that a promise-breaker is *not* likely to gain in the long-run, since no one will trust him after his detection; partly he obscurely hints that there may be a final judgment of God to be reckoned with. Apparently this suggestion is not merely made for the benefit of the orthodox reader but represents a laudable inconsistency in the author's own views, a belief that honesty is not merely the best policy, but has a higher sanctity of its own which Hobbes's analysis of morality fails to

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account for. Perhaps he was more deeply influenced than he knew by the traditional English hatred of a lie, as something inherently base.

Hobbes now enumerates no less than sixteen subsidiary 'laws of nature,' that is, conditions without which peaceable common existence would be impossible. The general character of these 'laws' is negative; they are prohibitions of various forms of behaviour which may be expected to lead to a breach of the peace, and the deduction, in each case, takes the form of an appeal to self-interest. *E.g.* if I show myself revengeful, or arrogant, or unwilling to refer a dispute between myself and my neighbour to a disinterested and impartial arbitrator, I am doing what lies in me to prolong the 'state of war,' and am thus losing the increased security of life and enjoyment of its good things which peace would have given me. The whole body of the nineteen 'laws,' Hobbes says, may be summed up in the simple formula which had already been given as an equivalent for the second 'law': 'To leave all men unexcusable, they have been contracted into one easy sum, intelligible even to the meanest capacity, and that is, *Do not that to another which thou wouldest not have done to thyself*; which sheweth him that he has no more to do

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in learning the laws of nature, but when, weighing the actions of other men with his own, they seem too heavy, to put them into the other part of the balance and his own into their place, that his own passions and self-love may add nothing to the weight; and then there is none of these laws of nature that will not appear unto him very reasonable' (*Leviathan*, c. xv.).

We see, then, that Hobbes's 'laws of nature,' looked at as a whole, afford a fair formulation of the fundamental negative condition upon which the maintenance of social order depends; no man is to expect more from his neighbours than he is willing that they should expect from him, and no man is to interfere with the doings of his neighbours in any way in which they may not equally interfere with his. The competitors in the great struggle of life are to start fair, and to 'play the game.' What we should seek in vain in any of Hobbes's expositions of his social doctrine is the great Hellenic conception of the state or community as having a further positive function, a duty to ennoble the lives of its members, so that each of them may, if he will, climb to spiritual heights which he could not have scaled alone. Hobbes can hardly be said to have any real belief in social institutions as the

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instruments and bearers of progressive civilisation, he treats them as merely so much machinery for the preservation of a *status quo*. He has mastered only the first half of Aristotle's famous dictum that 'the city comes into being that men may live, but continues to be that they may live well.'

We may now pass at once to a demonstration of the necessity of the organised state and its machinery. The 'laws of nature' are, indeed, in themselves a sufficient code of conduct, and if they were always observed, peaceful social existence would be guaranteed with all its accompanying benefits. But in the 'state of nature' we can have no security that they will be obeyed. They 'oblige in *foro interno*'; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place; but in *foro externo*, that is, to the putting them in act, not always,' since a man who persisted in keeping them while all his neighbours broke them, would infallibly lose by his conduct, and it is impossible, on Hobbes's theory of human nature, that a man should persist in doing what he knows to be contrary to his private interest. Thus they are, rightly speaking, not as yet *laws*, so long as men remain in a 'state of nature.' For a law means a command given and enforceable by a definite

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person. 'These dictates of reason men use to call by the name of laws, but improperly; for they are but conclusions or theorems, concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves, whereas law properly is the word of him that by right hath command over others' (*Leviathan*, c. xv.). What is needed, then, to secure actual obedience to them is that they should be converted into commands issued by an authority which has rightful claims to obedience, and has also sufficient force at its disposal to secure obedience by the infliction of such penalties for disobedience as may make it always to a man's own advantage to obey. What is needed is, in fact, the institution of a ruler, or sovereign, and with the creation of the ruler we have passed at once into a state of civil society, or political subjection. This is why, with Hobbes, the creation of a ruler or chief magistrate is identical with the creation of society itself, and rebellion against the ruler equivalent to the dissolution of the social bond itself.

Before we go on to examine the way in which the ruler is created, there are two points to which it is essential to call attention if Hobbes is not to be greatly misjudged. In spite of his insistence upon the view that the 'dictates of reason' do not

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become actual commands until there is some one to enforce them, Hobbes is not justly chargeable with the identification of the moral law with the caprices of an autocrat. The validity of the moral law, though not its character as '*law*,' is with him anterior to the establishment of the ruler, and depends upon what he takes to be the demonstrable coincidence of morality with the general interest. What the ruler is needed for is to provide the individual with a standing adequate *incentive* to behave morally, and Hobbes is at great pains to urge that his favourite constitution, an absolute monarchy, is precisely the form of society in which the ruler is least likely to have any personal interest independent of the well-being of the community, and may therefore be most safely trusted to see that his '*laws*' embody nothing but the conditions necessary for peace and security.

And again, though Hobbes's argument amounts to a defence of absolutism, the defence is throughout based on rationalistic and, consequently, democratic grounds. He is entirely free both from the superstition of a '*divine hereditary right*' inherent in monarchs, such as the Stuarts laid claim to, and from the doctrine that mere force itself constitutes right. His object is to show that

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the absolute authority of the sovereign has a foundation in right by tracing it back to its supposed origin in a voluntary 'transference of right' on the part of the subject, a transference made in the interests of the subject himself, and so to legitimate absolutism by giving it a utilitarian basis. The *jure divino* royalists were thus completely justified in their instinctive distrust of Hobbes. When once it is granted that absolute sovereignty is only defensible if it can be shown to be for the general interest, the door is opened for further inquiry whether absolutism really is for the general interest or not, and, if it can be shown that it is not, for the rejection of absolutism itself. Thus Hobbes's theories really contain the germs of the constitutionalism which he combated. To declare that absolutism requires an utilitarian justification is to be already half-way on the road to revolution; there is much more community of spirit between Hobbes and Locke or Sidney, or even Rousseau, than between Hobbes and Filmer.

The immediate object of Hobbes's deduction of the rights of the sovereign is closely connected with the political controversies of his own time. He is anxious to disprove the claims made by Parliament against the British Crown to be, in

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a special sense, the *representative* of the people and of popular rights. He therefore sets himself to argue that, in every society, the supreme executive authority is already itself the true representative of the whole community; the community, consequently, cannot be again 'represented' by any other institution, and all claims made by such institutions to authority co-ordinate with, or superior to, that of the executive, on the plea of their 'representative' character, must be nugatory. To effect this proof, he has recourse to the technical terms of the Roman law of corporations and their legal representation. He starts with the legal definition of a *person*. A person means any being whose words and acts are considered in law as issuing either from himself or from any other man or thing to whom they are attributed. In the latter case, where the words and acts of such a person are legally regarded as belonging to some other being or beings, whom he *represents*, the representer is an *artificial* person (e.g. an advocate, speaking from his brief, is an artificial person, who represents his client; what he says is taken in law as if it were uttered by, and committed, not the advocate himself, but his client). When the being thus represented by another owns the

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words and acts of his representative, he is said to authorise them, and the representative speaks, and acts with *authority*, so that an act done by authority always means an act 'done by commission or license from him whose right it is.' This at once leads to the conclusion that, by the 'law of nature,' any being who has 'authorised' another to represent him is bound by all engagements entered into by his representative on his behalf, so far as they come within the scope of the authorisation, exactly as if they were his own words or acts. To repudiate them is to be guilty of a breach of the law that covenants when made are to be kept.

This point being granted, it only remains to establish the proposition that all governments must be regarded as originating in a commission bestowed by a whole community upon the government to 'represent' it, and the logical defence of absolutism is complete. Accordingly Hobbes now proceeds to reason as follows. An aggregate of individual men can only become a true *society* in so far as it exhibits a unity of will and purpose. It is this unity of will which constitutes the multitude into a community. But there is, properly speaking, no such thing as a 'general' will, or will of society at large, which is not that of individuals. Only

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by a legal fiction can we speak of anything but individual beings as endowed with will. Consequently, the unity of society is only possible by means of representation. The 'will' of the society becomes a real thing when the original aggregate agree to appoint a determinate man, or body of men, their representative, *i.e.* to take the volitions of that man, or that body of men, as 'authorised' by every individual composing the aggregate.

In this way, and only in this way, an aggregate may, by legal fiction, become one *person*, *i.e.* a collective subject of legal rights and duties. 'A multitude of men are made *one* person when they are by one man, or by one person, represented so that it be done with the consent of every one of that multitude in particular. For it is the unity of the *Representer*, not the unity of the *Represented*, that maketh the person one. And it is the Representer that beareth the person, and but one person; and unity cannot otherwise be understood in multitude. And because the multitude naturally is not one but many, they cannot be understood for one, but many, authors of everything their representative saith or doth in their name, every man giving their common representer authority from himself in particular, and owning all the actions the representer doth' (*Leviathan*,

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c. xvi.). The only way, then, in which an aggregate of men can form themselves into a society for mutual defence against outsiders, and against one another's anti-social tendencies, is by unanimous agreement to appoint some definite man, or number of men, to act as their representative, whose commands each of the aggregate is henceforth to regard as issuing from himself, and by whose actions each henceforth is to regard himself as bound, exactly as though they had been performed by himself. In this way, the 'laws of nature,' the conditions of peace and security, become actually operative, since by making such an agreement, the represented implicitly authorise their representer to employ their united physical force, as though it were his own, in restraint of all disobedience to his commands, and thus create a coercive power adequate enough to give every individual personal motives to obey.

'The only way to erect such a common power . . . is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will; which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own and acknowledge himself to be the author of whatsoever he that so beareth

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their person shall act or cause to be acted in those things which concern the common peace and safety, and therein to submit their wills to his will and their judgments to his judgment. This is more than consent or concord; it is a real unity of them all in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man. . . . This done, the multitude, so united in one person, is called a *Commonwealth*. . . . This is the generation of that great *Leviathan*, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal God, to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof he is enabled to form the wills of them all to peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad. And in him consisteth the essence of the Commonwealth, which, to define it, is one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end that he may use the strength and means of them all as he shall think expedient for their peace and common defence. And he that carrieth this person is called *Sovereign* and said to have

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sovereign power, and every one besides, his *subject*' (*Leviathan*, c. xvii.).

One or two points in this deduction call, perhaps, for special remark. (1) It should be clear that, in spite of his absolutist leanings, what Hobbes is trying to express by the aid of his legal fictions is the great democratic idea of self-government. The coercive powers of the ruler are only legitimated in his eyes by the thought that they give effect to what is at heart the will of the whole people over whom he rules; the sovereign is, in effect, the incarnation of the national will. But as his philosophy will not allow him to admit the reality of any purpose which is not that of a definite man, he has to conceive of this national spirit and purpose as having no actual existence until it is embodied in a representative of flesh and blood. The nation is one man, with a will and purpose of its own, but it is one only by the legal fiction which treats the acts of an agent or representative as if they were those of that which he represents. To borrow an analogy from the case of the individual, the soul of the great artificial 'body politic' is not diffused over the whole organism, 'all in every part,' but definitely located in a central organ, or brain. This is why Hobbes is so careful to insist that legitimate sovereignty

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must be based on an express or tacit consent of every member of the subject body, and also why he is afterwards at great pains to argue that his favourite form of government, the absolute sovereignty of a single man, is just the one in which, from the nature of the case, the ruler is least likely to have any private interests of his own distinct from those of the community, and, in fact, is most nearly a mere mouthpiece of the national will.

(2) With Hobbes, as we see, the creation of a commonwealth, and the creation of a central coercive or executive power, form one and the same act. It is by the constitution of an executive that the 'laws of nature,' which bid men to seek peace and ensue it, cease to be amiable but impracticable ideals and become operative realities. He is thus the author of the doctrine, revived in the nineteenth century by Austin and his disciples, that sovereign power is in its nature one and indivisible, and that there can be no real distinction between the different functions of government, so that the making of laws may belong to one set of persons, the enforcing them by penalties to a second, and the interpretation of them in particular cases to a third. It is on this point that Hobbes's political theory is most

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strikingly at variance with those of his best-known successors. When Locke formulated the philosophy of the Revolution, Whigs in his treatises on *Civil Government*, he was inevitably led, in the attempt to justify resistance to a chief magistrate who violates his trust, to make a distinction which is opposed to the central thought of Hobbes. With Locke the fundamental and original 'social compact' consists simply in the determination of a number of men to live in future under a known and common law of action instead of being guided by the uncertain and fluctuating dictates of individual judgment, *i.e.* in the will to establish a common legislature. The appointment of a definite set of persons armed with power to put the decisions of this legislature into act—the creation of executive officials—is a later proceeding, and the chief magistrate thus becomes a mere delegate of the legislature, a trustee, who may lawfully be removed whenever he transgresses the limits of the powers delegated to him. Locke is thus the author of the famous doctrine of the 'division of powers' between distinct 'branches' of government, and of the theory of the importance of 'constitutional checks,' by which one 'branch' may be hindered from usurping the functions of the others.

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(3) We might perhaps add that in virtue of his definition of the ends of government as exhausted by 'the preservation of 'peace and common defence,' Hobbes may be regarded as a forerunner of the negative *laissez aller* doctrine of the functions of the state. The sovereign is there, in fact, to remove certain standing obstacles to the secure prosecution by his subjects of their individual aims, to keep society from relapsing into primitive anarchy. With his defective theory of volition, Hobbes can naturally find no place for any conception of the state as an organisation for the positive promotion among its members of the 'good life' or 'civilisation' or 'progress,' or whatever else we may please to call that ideal of life, by which the rationally free man is distinguished from the barbarian. The very existence of moral and social progress is, in fact, just the one striking feature of historical civilisation which his account of human nature, to be consistent with itself, is bound to ignore.

CHAPTER V

THE POWERS OF THE SOVEREIGN

THAT the legitimate powers of a sovereign are absolute, and that all resistance to his authority must be a 'breach of covenant,' and therefore unjust, are consequences which follow directly from Hobbes's conception of the fundamental conditions of social existence. The sovereign has, in fact, been authorised by me, if I am a member of the Commonwealth, to make what regulations he thinks fit for the preservation of order and peace, and to use the whole physical force of the community to punish or prevent violations of those regulations. Refusal to obey, or resistance to the execution of the sovereign's command is thus a distinct breach of my given promise, and against the 'law of nature,' *i.e.* the rational consideration, that covenants ought to be kept, *i.e.* that the making of them is useless unless they are kept. Hence the duty of unconditional obedience on the part of the subject. But there

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is no corresponding duty on the part of the sovereign. He has been expressly authorised to make such regulations as he thinks fit, and, consequently, no violation of compact can be pleaded against him, no matter what commands he may think good to issue. Hobbes throws this latter part of his argument, which aims at justifying the Stuart claim of irresponsibility of the kings of England to their subjects, into a curiously artificial form. The argument by which the sovereign is set up is, he says, one between each individual member of a crowd and every other. There has been no agreement between the whole community as such, on the one part, and the sovereign, on the other. Before the creation of the Leviathan, in fact, the community has no corporate existence, as such, and the sovereign is, as yet, no sovereign, but only one man, or a number of men, among others, and therefore there are no such parties as sovereign and public to bargain with one another. Or even if we suppose that the person finally created sovereign had procured his nomination by private bargaining with individual members of the crowd, yet when once he has been declared sovereign all these bargains become invalid, since he now, as sovereign, has the right to say what agreements shall or shall not be con-

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sidered binding. Hence no aqt. of a sovereign towards any of his subjects can be unjust; in a commonwealth, justice, in fact, simply means observing the rules of conduct which the sovereign has laid down (*Leviathan*, c. xviii.). But if I plead that I was not a party to the original agreement of every man with every man to accept this particular sovereign, and to acknowledge his acts as if they were my own, then he is not *my* sovereign at all, and I am no member of the society which, as such, is created by his elevation. Towards him and them I am still in 'the state of nature,' and may without injustice be treated as an enemy, and subject to all that is incidental to the 'war of all against all.'

It follows that a sovereign, once instituted, can in no case be guilty of an injustice towards any of his subjects. And Hobbes bids us take note that in the psalm which, according to the notions of the seventeenth century, expresses David's penitence for adultery and murder, no acknowledgment is made that the author had done a wrong to Uriah in first corrupting his wife and then compassing his death; it is for sin against *God* that the Psalmist entreats forgiveness, not for wrong done to man. So, Hobbes concludes, it is the 'teaching of Scripture, as well as of reason,

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that the ruler can never be unjust to his subject, and therefore never lawfully accused, judged, or condemned by those who have themselves agreed to take his orders as the measure of just and unjust. Still, it is admitted, a ruler may abuse his power, as David did, and if this is not injustice to the subject, it is at least *iniquity* for which the ruler is amenable to the judgment of God. 'Though the action be against the law of nature, as being contrary to equity (as was the killing of Uriah by David), yet it was not an injury to Uriah, but to God. Not to Uriah, because the right to do what he pleased was given him by Uriah himself; and yet to God because David was God's subject, and prohibited all iniquity by the law of nature. Which distinction David himself, when he repented the fact, evidently confirmed, saying, *To Thee only have I sinned (Leviathan, c. xxi).*' As in a former case, this suggestion of a divine judgment to which even the irresponsible sovereign is amenable, leaves us in a perplexing uncertainty how far it is a concession to the weaknesses of orthodox readers, or how far it may represent a genuine feeling on the writer's part that there is, after all, a moral authority more ancient and august than the various leviathans men have made for themselves.

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It must not of course be supposed that it is only a monarch who can be absolute. Hobbes is careful to point out that it follows from his theory of the 'social compact' that every government, when once duly established, whatever its form may be, is clothed with the same absolute authority over its subjects. Indeed, it is in the case of a 'democracy,' i.e. a state in which the whole assembly of citizens is itself the sovereign body, that he thinks the fact of absolute authority most patent. 'When an assembly of men is made sovereign, then no man imagineth any such covenant to have past in the institution, for no man is so dull as to say, for example, the people of Rome made a covenant with the Romans to hold the sovereignty on such and such conditions, which not performed, the Romans might lawfully depose the Roman people. That men see not the reason to be alike in a monarchy and in a popular government proceedeth from the ambition of some, that are kinder to the government of an assembly, whereof they may hope to participate than of monarchy, which they despair to enjoy.' (*Leviathan*, c. xviii.) Hobbes is, however, of opinion that of all forms of government 'monarchy best answers the purpose for which sovereignty is instituted, and that for several

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reasons: (1) A monarch's private interest is more intimately bound up with the interests of his subjects than can be the case with the private interests of the members of a sovereign assembly. 'The riches, power, and honour of a monarch arise only from the riches, strength, and reputation of his subjects. . . . Whereas in a Democracy or Aristocracy, the public prosperity confers not so much to the private fortune of one that is corrupt as doth many times' a perfidious advice, a treacherous action, civil war' (*Ib.*, c. xix.)—a sentence upon which the history of the relations of the restored Stuarts with the Court of France surely affords an entertaining commentary. (2) A monarch is freer to receive advice from all quarters, and to keep that advice secret, than an assembly. (3) Whereas the resolutions of a monarch are subject only to the inconstancy of human nature, those of an assembly are exposed to a further inconstancy arising from disagreement between its members. Monarchy thus offers the maximum of security for 'continuity' of policy. (4) A monarch 'cannot disagree with himself out of envy or interest, but an assembly may, and that to such a height as may produce a civil war' (*Ib.*, c. xix.).

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Against these advantages of monarchy may be pleaded two disadvantages, (1) the ill effects produced by the influence of flatterers and favourites with the monarch, and (2) the disorders which arise when the monarchy descends to an infant or an imbecile. These, however, are discounted by considering (1) that flatterers and favourites, in the form of interested demagogues, are as common in popular as in monarchical government; and under the former have more power to do harm and less to do good than under the latter. 'For to accuse requires less eloquence (such is man's nature) than to excuse; and condemnation, than absolution, more resembles justice' (*Leviathan*, c. xix.); and that the powers of an infant or imbecile monarch can always be placed in the hands of a qualified body of regents, and therefore any disturbances that arise must be attributed not to the inherent defects of monarchical government, but to 'the ambition of subjects, and ignorance of their duty' (*Ib.*). As we have already seen, Hobbes's conception of human nature and the ends of action precludes his reckoning with what a more idealistic philosophy would probably regard as the chief objection to despotism, even when it is both benevolent and capable, viz. the conviction that freedom and self-

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government are in themselves goods of the highest order, and that a slight increase in efficiency is dearly bought by their sacrifice.

From the principle that all authority is in its nature absolute, Hobbes has no difficulty in vindicating for the English Crown the leading powers which had been challenged by the Puritan revolution. In particular, we may note (1) that the monarch is in nowise bound to govern—in modern phrase, in accord with the ‘Acts of Parliament.’ Parliament is merely a body called together by the monarch to advise him as to the state of the kingdom and the measures to be taken for the common peace. The claim of an elected Parliament to be, in a special sense, the ‘representative of the people’ is entirely unfounded. The people are already completely ‘represented’ by their sovereign—the monarch, and consequently cannot be represented over again. What powers Parliament has it enjoys simply as a voluntary gift on the part of the real ‘representative of the people,’ who is therefore free to follow its advice, to reject it, or to promulgate laws of his own without consulting it, as he thinks best (*Ib.*, c. xxii.). (2) The monarch has likewise the right to supreme command of all the forces of the community by land

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and sea; he has been instituted to take charge of the common peace, and therefore must be understood to be entrusted with the means necessary to the execution of the task. Thus the demand of the Long Parliament for control of the militia was an act of usurpation. (3) The monarch, again, has the sole right to levy taxes at his own discretion, a right specially insisted upon by Hobbes with reference to the controversy about ship-money. (4) He has also the right, arising from his position as the authority from whom all the rules of justice emanate, of 'hearing and deciding all controversies which may arise concerning law, either civil or natural, or concerning fact' (*Leviathan*, c. xviii.), since, apart from this right, 'there is no protection of one subject against another.' It would follow then that the opposition to the extraordinary jurisdiction of the Star Chamber, the Ecclesiastical Commission, and the Council of the North was entirely illegitimate. (5) The monarch also has, and this is the most important point of all, the sole right to judge what opinions, in Church and State, may safely be tolerated. For it is his function, as keeper of the general peace, 'to be judge of what opinions and doctrines are averse, and what conducing to peace.' It follows, there-

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fore, that it is for him, and for him alone, to decide 'on what occasions, how far, and what men are to be trusted withal in speaking to multitudes of people, and who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they be published. For the actions of men proceed from their opinions, and in the well governing of men's opinions consisteth the well governing of men's actions in order to their peace and concord' (*Leviathan*, c. xviii.). Of the bearing of this conclusion upon Hobbes's views of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the sovereign I shall have something to say in the next chapter.

It must be observed that the highly doctrinaire character of this defence of the Royalists' position at once lays it open to a damaging attack which Hobbes does nothing to meet. He has proved conclusively, if you grant the truth of his peculiar view of human nature, that 'peace and concord' are only attainable in political society. He has also shown that in every political society there must be somewhere a centre of authority endowed with plenary powers, and only restrained in the exercise of them by the consideration that governmental authority, pushed beyond a certain point, will provoke rebellion and so defeat its own ends. What he has not proved, but is con-

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tent simply to assume, is that, as a matter of historical fact, this plenitude of power is, under the constitution of England, reposed in the person of the king, or in other words, that the government of England is really a monarchy in his sense of the term. Now this was precisely what the Parliamentary statesmen denied. According to them, the powers of the English Crown were, in point of fact, and had always been, circumscribed by a superior authority, which is described *e.g.* in the *Petition of Right*, as 'the laws and statutes of the realm,' 'the laws and customs of this realm,' and they had, as we know, sound historical reasons to urge in support of this view of the case. As Hobbes never takes issue on the historical question, his leading opponents would have been perfectly justified in calling his argument, as applied to the proceedings of the Parliamentarians, an elaborate *ignoratio elenchi*. The question at issue between Charles I. and Hampden or Pym was not whether the ultimate seat of authority in England is 'absolute' or not, but where that seat of authority lies. Hobbes's evasion of the real question throws a flood of light upon the fundamental weakness of the theory which treats government as legitimated by 'contract.' Such a hard and fast theory is bound to

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be, at some point or other, discrepant with the actual facts of the historical situation. A constitution is not a thing which is made once for all by the wisdom of a particular set of persons; it is something which grows up gradually under all sorts of perceptible and imperceptible influences. At any given time, the various formulæ by which it is described by those who live under it are sure to be only imperfectly consistent with one another. Nay, further, since the formulæ for the most part are things devised to fit a past state of affairs, which continue to be repeated long after the situation they describe has been profoundly modified in fact, they are almost certain to be largely false when accepted as an account of the stage of development actually reached, long before they lose their inherited prestige. And of development and progress as great social facts, Hobbes, as we saw, has as good as no conception.

From his examination of the powers of the sovereign, Hobbes advances to a consideration of the liberties of the subject. One might be tempted to think that the latter must be non-existent in such a scheme as his. But there are certain inevitable limits even to the most unrestricted absolutism, and there are others which suggest themselves as soon as absolutism itself is

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treated as only defensible on a utilitarian basis. What these limits are, according to Hobbes, is explained in chapter xxi. of the *Leviathan*. The 'liberty of the subject' is simply that part of the supposed original 'right of every man to everything' of which he cannot possibly have divested himself, or of which he cannot be supposed to have divested himself without defeating his purpose in entering into the 'social compact'—viz., the preservation of himself. He is free then (1) to refuse, even when commanded by the sovereign, to kill or maim himself, or to submit without resistance to those who are charged to kill or maim him; (2) to refuse to confess a crime, except upon previous promise of pardon; (3) to refuse to execute an order to kill another man, and more generally to decline any dangerous or dishonourable office by executing which he imperils that very self-preservation for the sake of which he has entered into social life. On this ground Hobbes justifies the refusal of 'men of feminine courage' (like himself) to do personal service as soldiers, provided they are ready to furnish a sufficient substitute. Even a band of rebels, he holds, may without injustice refuse to capitulate except on a promise of pardon. To these elementary liberties we subsequently find added com-

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plete liberty of conscience, so far as private thoughts are concerned. Thought is absolutely free, simply because it is impossible to subject it; the expression of thought in words, as we have seen, is not free at all, it being for the sovereign to decide what thoughts may be made public without danger to the peace. It has only to be added that the authority of a sovereign, of course, only lasts so long as he is able to ensure the general safety, for no covenant can deprive a man of his right to protect himself when he has no other protector. Political allegiance is therefore terminated, the life of the *Leviathan* extinguished, when a monarch is captured, in war and purchases his personal liberty by submission to the conqueror, or when he voluntarily releases his subjects from their obedience, and so declares that he no longer embodies the public will for self-protection.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH AND STATE

SINCE it has been already declared that the sovereign, in the interests of the general peace, has the sole right to determine what opinions may be safely taught in the commonwealth, it follows at once that Hobbes can allow of no division between a civil and a spiritual power. In fact he holds, as a man of the seventeenth century not unreasonably might, that the most potent of all sources of anarchy and civil disorder is precisely the claim of the clergy of various churches to possess an inherent right, not depending on any grant from the political authority, to declare what religious doctrines shall be taught and what form of church discipline permitted, and to depose or rebel against civil rulers who refuse to submit to their dictation on these points. Writing, as he did, in the seventeenth century, Hobbes found it necessary to plead the cause of Erastianism not only on grounds of reason, but by the aid of an

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appeal to Scripture, and the consequence is that nearly a half of *Leviathan* is taken up by the ecclesiastical controversy in which he has to oppose at once the Romanist, the Scotch Covenanter, and the ordinary Anglican High Churchman. It is impossible in a short sketch like the present to do more than indicate the general character of the singular result at which he arrives. The key to his whole position must be sought in his pithy aphorism that religion is not philosophy, but law. That is, the sovereign authorises the preaching of certain doctrines and prohibits others, not because the former are scientifically true, and the latter false (in fact, we saw long ago that all doctrines about God lie outside the limits of human knowledge), but because the former are conducive to peace, and the latter to discord. And our profession of faith in the authorised religion is to be understood not as a declaration of our philosophical belief, but as a declaration of our submission to the rightful political authority of the sovereign. Hobbes has then to meet the objection that, on his view, our duty to the sovereign must, whenever the sovereign is an 'infidel,' lead us into disobedience to God. The 'infidel' sovereign commands us to practise a 'false' religion, God commands us, in his Word,

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to embrace the 'true.' Are we then to obey man rather than God, and must the martyrs who died for the faith be accounted criminals? Hobbes's reply is, in principle, that we have to learn what is the 'true' religion from the 'canonical' Scriptures, and that a writing depends for its 'canonical' character upon its authorisation as such by the sovereign, who also, in virtue of his general right to prohibit dangerous teaching, is the final court of appeal as to the interpretation of 'Scripture.' It must, therefore, be vain to plead our interpretations of some work which we regard as 'inspired' in justification of our refusal to submit to the sovereign. As for the martyrs of history, no man can be a 'martyr,' or witness for the truth of a revelation from God, except its immediate recipient. All that any other martyr can testify to is his belief in the veracity of the person who claims to have received the revelation. To reject his witness is thus not to reject his commands of God, but merely to reject the claims of a certain person to have had communications with God. Now the only way in which a man can prove his divine commission is by the performance of miracles, and since miracles have ceased, no one can now establish his claims to be believed as a messenger of God except indirectly by the agree-

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ment of his teaching with that of Christ and the apostles. But Christ and the apostles taught, both by precept and by example, the duty of submission to civil authorities. Hence no man can claim their authority in favour of disobedience to the sovereign. In the purely hypothetical case of a man receiving to-day a direct command from God to disobey his sovereign, he must, no doubt, be prepared to obey God, who can make it his highest interest to do so, rather than the sovereign; but since he is unable to prove his divine commission by miracles, he has no ground for complaint if the sovereign refuses to believe in it and punishes him as an offender.

To make this doctrine more palatable to his readers, Hobbes combines it with an elaborate scriptural exegesis of his own, in the development of which he rivals or outdoes his orthodox antagonists in profusion of biblical quotations and ingenuity of interpretation, not infrequently throwing out remarkable anticipations of more modern criticism. The fundamental proposition of the whole scheme is that the 'kingdom of God,' spoken of in Scripture, is not an ecclesiastical system, but a civil government in which God, as represented by a visible human lieutenant, reigns as civil sovereign. This kingdom was first

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instituted when Moses was directly installed by God as His representative in the government of the Jews, but suspended when that people revolted from their lawful rulers, the successors of Moses, and set up the kingdom of Saul. The mission of Jesus was to announce its restoration, not in his lifetime, but in an age yet to come, when the righteous are to rise from the dead and be reigned over personally by Jesus, as God's representative, in Palestine. Hence the only condition imposed from the first as necessary for entrance into the Church was the acknowledgment of the belief that Jesus is the 'Messiah,' i.e. the destined monarch of the coming 'Kingdom of God.' All that a Christian is obliged to, therefore, as a condition of salvation is the belief that at some future time Jesus will reappear on earth as a civil sovereign, and the intention of then obeying his authority; in the meanwhile the Christian is bound, by the express language of Scripture itself, to complete submission to the existing civil power. As for the 'Church,' which sometimes claims to be the 'Kingdom of God' announced by Jesus, and consequently to have a first lien, so to say, on the obedience of Christians, Hobbes gives us a choice of alternatives. 'If it be one person, it is the same thing with a commonwealth of Christians,

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called a *commonwealth* because it consisteth of men united in one person, their sovereign, and a *church* because it consisteth in Christian men united in one Christian sovereign. But if the church be not one person, then it hath no authority at all; it can neither command, nor do any action at all . . . nor has any will, reason, nor voice, for all these qualities are personal.' (*Leviathan*, c. xxxiii.) It is then argued at length that the only commission given by Christ to his apostles, and by them to their successors, was to teach and persuade, and the only weapon with which they were armed against the recalcitrant, the power of excommunication, i.e. the threat of exclusion from the future 'Kingdom of God.' Such power as the clergy now exercise in Christian countries, then, is derived from, and dependent on, the political sovereign, who is the single fountain at once of temporal and 'spiritual' authority. They are, in fact, so far as concerns their social status, a body of civil servants, and nothing more, and Hobbes declares that whereas the king of England, as responsible to no tribunal on earth, may rightly claim to rule *Dei gratia*, a bishop holds his see 'by the grace of God and the king's permission.'

The fourth and last division of *Leviathan* is

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devoted to an unsparing attack, conducted chiefly with an eye to Bellarmine's arguments for Papal supremacy, upon 'the kingdom of darkness,' that is, the church organised as a society independent of the authorisation of the civil power, and claiming an independent 'spiritual' jurisdiction to be enforced at its peril by the 'secular arm' through the medium of temporal disabilities and penalties. The origin of this 'kingdom of darkness' is sought in the ambition of the Roman clergy, which led them first to accept support and grants of power from the Christian Roman Emperors, and finally, in the general decay of the imperial system, to usurp the place of 'their original protectors. 'If a man,' says Hobbes, in 'one of his most famous epigrams, 'considers the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof. For so did the Papacy start up on a sudden out of the ruins of that heathen power' (*Leviathan*, c. xlvii.). The ghost, Hobbes adds, has partly been exorcised in England, first by the Tudor sovereigns who overthrew the power of the Pope, then by the Presbyterians of the Long Parliament who put down the Bishops, and finally (we must remember that this sentence,

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which does not appear in the modified Latin text of 1669, was written in 1651), by the Independents, who destroyed the domination of Presbyterianism, 'and so we are reduced to the independency of the primitive Christians, to follow Paul or Cephas or Apollos, every man as he liketh best, which, if it be without contention . . . is perhaps the best' (*Ib.*). But, he adds, the exorcism will never be complete until a bold ruler takes in hand the universities, the chief sources hitherto of high ecclesiastical pretensions, and compels them to instruct their students in the true rudiments of political science, and the true grounds of political submission. That is, said his critics, until the *Leviathan* is officially made the sole text-book of political science.

CONCLUSION

THE true measure of Hobbes's greatness as a philosopher was hardly recognised either by his own contemporaries in England or by their successors of the eighteenth century. The innumerable attacks of the orthodox upon his theories, on the ground of their alleged irreligious and immoral tendency, are mostly of an ephemeral kind, but the attitude of Locke and Berkeley, who had capacity enough to understand him, if they had cared to do so, and who would have found his nominalism at least entirely to their taste is more significant. Locke never mentions his name at all throughout the *Essay*, and when accused by Stillingfleet of arriving at results similar to those of Hobbes, retorts with a sarcasm upon the good Bishop's familiarity with a 'suspected' author. Berkeley mentions him once, in his *Alciphron*, along with Spinoza and Vanini, as a typical atheist. Though Warburton, with his usual love for a paradox, prided himself on having been the first person to discover the real strength of Hobbes's

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position, real appreciation of his merits in England begins with the utilitarians of the early nineteenth century, Austin, Grote, and Molesworth, to the last of whom we owe the only approach as yet made to a complete edition of Hobbes's works. Down to their time Hobbes's chief influence on English thought lay in the stimulus his ethical theories afforded to a profounder moral analysis and a deeper study of human nature on the part of antagonists who sought to vindicate the originality of disinterested action and to base morality upon grounds independent of positive law. The ethical work of Cudworth, of Shaftesbury, of Cumberland, of Butler is throughout inspired by the felt need to meet and overcome a conception of human nature which goes back, in the end, to the philosopher of Malmesbury. On the Continent the direct influence of Hobbes made itself more immediately and more permanently felt. Within the philosopher's own lifetime Spinoza had adopted, as the basis of the theory of government given in his unfinished *Tractatus Politicus*, a view of 'natural right' and the 'social compact,' which is, in all fundamentals, identical with that of Hobbes, whose influence is also visibly traceable in the argument for the freedom of philosophy

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from theological restraints set forth in the famous *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Leibniz, too, in his youthful recoil from scholasticism was powerfully attracted by Hobbes's clear-cut logical nominalism and outspoken materialism, nor did he cease to express his admiration for the Englishman's genius after he had finally arrived at his own mature doctrine of spiritual realism. It has been shown that throughout the eighteenth century, down to the time of Kant, Hobbes continued to be an object of philosophic interest in Germany. But the detailed facts as to his influence at home and abroad belong to the general history of modern thought, and necessarily fall outside the limits of a brief sketch like the present.

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PHILOSOPHIES ANCIENT AND MODERN 7

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I DESIRE to acknowledge my obligations to Prof. Campbell Fraser's books on Locke (especially the introduction to his edition of the *Essay*), and to Mr. H. R. Fox Bourne's very valuable *Life of John Locke* (London, 1876). In the concluding chapters I have derived help from Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, and Prof. Ch. Bastide's *John Locke: ses théories politiques* (Paris, 1906). I am indebted to Prof. G. F. Stout for several useful suggestions.

S. A.

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LOCKE

CHAPTER I

LIFE

LOCKE'S life is one of those, not rare in the history of English letters and science, in which the scholar is doubled with the man of the world and of public affairs. His instinct for speculation and his delicate health marked him out for a life of academic retirement; his talent for business and his practical capacity secured him weight in politics, and put within his reach, had he chosen to accept them, important state employments. He combined scholarly seclusion with public influence. In his latest years he held for a time high office as a commissioner of trade; and all his life he was in the background of politics, the trusted adviser of Shaftesbury, of the party who aimed at the establishment of William of Orange, and finally, of Somers and Charles Montague. Though he was always known as a man of eminent parts, his fame as a writer was confined to his last

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fifteen years. He himself chose as his profession the more active work of medicine, though he practised it only for a few years in Shaftesbury's family, and occasionally afterwards. His life was in fact that of a *servant*, who lived in close relation to the men of science of his time, such as Boyle, Sydenham, and Newton, and who, like Lord Acton in our own day, was at the same time the confidential friend of statesmen. It cannot be doubted that his intellectual and practical interests acted and reacted upon each other. Though not himself the author of great public measures, he took his share in many and he voiced the principles of liberty which inspired them. On the other hand, the devotion to truth which compels him to see things for himself, as they are, within the limits of his vision, is accompanied in him by a native sagacity and caution, an insight, perhaps acquired in affairs, into the character of men, and a sympathy with the needs of the plain average man, which fitted him to be the exponent of a new method of thinking and to set the tone of thought to the century which succeeded him. More than in the case of most philosophers, Locke's history is varied with incident and involved with the history of the anxious and seminal time in which he lived.

L I F E

He was born at Wrington, a village in Somersetshire, on the 29th of August 1632. His father, John Locke, was Clerk to the Justices of the Peace, one of whom—Alexander Popham—took command of a volunteer regiment of horse raised in the parliamentary cause in 1642. The elder Locke took up arms under him as a captain. He suffered heavily in property by the Civil War. Of his mother the younger John Locke expressed himself in affectionate terms. His father educated him with great care, treating him with rigour as a child, but admitting him to friendship as he grew up,—a practice which Locke approves. A letter to his father is preserved which testifies to the tenderness Locke felt for him. Early years are impressionable, and Locke writes in 1661, ‘I no sooner perceived myself in the world, but I found myself in a storm which has lasted almost hitherto.’ By Popham’s offices he was sent, probably in 1646, to Westminster School, then under the government of the famous Dr. Richard Busby, and was there put through an incessant drilling in Greek and Latin, which may have made Locke the good scholar he was, but may also explain the depreciation which he afterwards, in his *Thoughts upon Education*, expressed for such exercises. From Westminster he proceeded in 1652, as a

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junior student, to Christchurch, Oxford, the Dean of which was then Dr. John Owen, appointed by Cromwell. Owen was also Vice-Chancellor of the University, and he and his Puritan colleagues worked with a will towards redeeming the University from the idleness and contempt of learning into which it had fallen. Owen proclaimed and taught the doctrine of toleration—a fact not to be forgotten in the life of the future author of the *Letters concerning Toleration*. Locke did not relish the studies of the place, and regretted that his father had sent him to Oxford. He disliked the public disputations in the schools, which he thought ‘invented for wrangling and ostentation, rather than to discover truth.’ He regarded his early years at Oxford as wasted, because the only philosophy then known there ‘was the peripatetic, perplexed with obscure terms and useless questions.’ He spent, we hear, a good part of his first years in the University in reading romances. But he attended the lectures of the mathematicians Wallis and Ward, and was intimate with Pocock, the professor of Arabic. It was, however, the study of Descartes which first ‘gave him a relish of philosophical things. He was rejoiced in reading them, because, though he very often differed in opinion from this writer, he yet found that

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what he said was very intelligible, from whence he was encouraged to think that his not having understood others had possibly not proceeded from a defect in his understanding.' It is not easy to make out the sources of Locke's philosophical thought—except Descartes, and the *Port Royal Logic*. Bacon he knew, and also Hobbes (though, he says, not intimately), and he appears to have been influenced by the atomism of Gassendi. Leibniz he knew little, and expressed in later life a low opinion of him.¹ Malebranche he studied and criticised. But we can well believe his own statement that he learned more from intercourse with men than from books.

Locke became a senior student of Christchurch in 1659, and the emoluments of that office were, with a small property inherited from his father of about £70 a year, his main source of income till 1684, when he was deprived of his studentship. Even when he lived in London, he paid frequent and long visits to Oxford. After the Restoration, a new order of things arose in the University, which Locke welcomed. His bringing up as a Puritan, combined with his disappointment with

¹ The *Nouveaux Essais*, in which Leibniz expounded and reviewed the *Essay*, Locke never saw, and indeed, owing to Locke's death, it was not published in Leibniz's lifetime.

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the Puritan rule, may have fostered the bent of his mind towards latitudinarian views of theology, and towards dislike of extreme fanaticism or 'enthusiasm.' He was appointed to lectureships at Christchurch usually held by clergymen. His father had designed him for the ministry. But Locke declined a tempting offer leading to preferment in the Irish Church, not desiring to commit himself to a profession which he could not divest himself of, supposing that he failed in it. Finally, he decided upon the profession of medicine. He had for some years pursued the study of physical science, and had consorted with Boyle and the other members of the Oxford branch of the Royal Society. Boyle's *History of the Air*, which Locke edited after Boyle's death, contains observations registered by Locke from 1660 to 1667. He never obtained the doctorate in medicine, and there was some difficulty in securing for him the degree of Bachelor, because he had not attended the regular courses of lectures in medicine. He began practice at Oxford, as an amateur partner of his friend Dr. Thomas.

In 1665 Locke obtained, in a way which is not clear, the appointment of secretary to Sir Walter Vane, who went to Clèves on a special embassy to the Elector of Brandenburg. Letters to his friend

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John Strachey describe with somewhat heavy humour the incidents of his stay there. Locke must have shown his abilities, for, on his return, he was offered an appointment in an embassy to Spain. Though he was plainly much tempted, his good genius saved him from diplomacy for philosophy, and he remained at Oxford practising medicine.

It was in 1667 that, by an accident arising out of his profession, he became acquainted with Shaftesbury—an event which determined his future life. Shaftesbury (then Lord Ashley) came to Oxford, to drink the waters of the village of Astrop, not far off, which were then much recommended. Owing to some delay in the supply of the waters, Locke, in the absence of Dr. Thomas, waited upon Ashley to explain. The impression the two men left upon each other was such as to lead to a lasting friendship. Locke went to London in 1667 at Ashley's invitation, and thenceforth became a member of Ashley's household. He acted as physician to the household, though he also practised to some extent outside. Ashley himself owed his life to an operation performed by Locke. But he was not only the doctor, but was intrusted with intimate private affairs of the family, arranging the marriage of Ashley's son, and becoming thereafter tutor of the little boy who was to be the

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Shaftesbury of the *Characteristics* and to disown the philosophy of his tutor. More important still, he became Ashley's confidential adviser, though it is not necessary to suppose him privy to all the statesman's political actions. He helped in drawing up in 1663 the Fundamental Constitutions for the government of Carolina, of which settlement Ashley was one of the proprietors. A draft of the scheme exists in Locke's handwriting, and whether this scheme is due to him wholly or only in part, its liberal provisions for freedom of religion, if only belief in God is avowed, are in keeping with Locke's opinions. When Shaftesbury became Chancellor in 1672, Locke became secretary of presentations (to benefices), and later, secretary of the recently established Council of Trade and Foreign Plantations (or Colonies), an office which he retained till the Council was dissolved in 1675, though he does not appear to have received the salary due to him. While he was thus occupied in practical affairs, he still carried on his work in medicine, and was allied in friendship with Sydenham, who commends him in no measured terms in the preface to the third edition of his *Method of curing Fevers* (1676). In 1668, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society. Though he was more than once a member of Council, he

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does not, however, seem to have taken any active part in its proceedings. But about this time in a small circle of friends there occurred the famous meeting from which the *Essay* took its origin. 'Five or six friends,' he says, 'meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves without coming nearer resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course, and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented, and thereupon it was agreed that this should be our first inquiry. Some hasty and undigested thoughts, on a subject I had never before considered, which I set down against our next meeting gave the first entrance into this discourse.' We know the names of two of his friends, Tyrrell and Thomas, and that the discourse was about the principles of worship and revealed religion. A short paragraph dated 1671 of his common-place book has been preserved, which marks the beginning of Locke's work.

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Relieved of his office in 1675, Locke spent the next four years in rest and travel in France. His chest always was weak, and from this time forward he had constantly to struggle against asthma, for which the smoke-laden air of London in the winter was peculiarly unfavourable. We possess journals of his sojourn in France, which enable us to follow his movements and the observations he made there (*e.g.* his report on the vineyards made for Shaftesbury). Most of his time was spent at Montpellier, the great medical school, and Locke describes the initiation of a young doctor there, in terms which recall the famous passage of Molière's *Malade Imaginaire*. Some considerable time he also spent in Paris, in the society of learned friends. But he returned in 1679 to serve again as adviser to Shaftesbury during the troubled years of the Exclusion Bill and the Whig Plots, in which his movements can only obscurely be traced. Shaftesbury was obliged to escape to Holland in 1681, where he died the next year, and Locke, whose political associations brought him into suspicion, thought it prudent to leave England for Holland in 1683, and there he remained till after the Revolution, returning in 1689.

In Holland he made many friends, one of them in particular Van Limborch, the head of the Re-

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monstrant (or Arminian) College, to whom he addressed the *Epistola de Tolerantia* in its Latin form. After some travelling he settled at Utrecht in 1684, where he learned that Charles II. had compelled Fell, the Dean of Christchurch, to deprive him of his Studentship as having behaved 'factiously and undutifully to the Government.' He was left now for his support to his small private property and the annuity of £100 which Shaftesbury had provided for him. Not long after, his name was attached to a list of persons whom James II. requested the Dutch Government to hand over on suspicion of being implicated in Monmouth's insurrection, from which Locke had carefully held himself aloof. Locke remained in hiding for some time at Amsterdam and afterwards settled at Clèves under an assumed name. The danger was probably not so great as he feared—the Dutch Government would probably not have surrendered him. His friend Pembroke secured him James's pardon and begged him to return. Locke proudly declined the pardon as having been guilty of no crime. But the danger was past, and he was free to consult his own desire for leisure for study and removed to Rotterdam, where he lived in the house of a Quaker friend, Furly, and was in close association with the

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English exiles, more particularly Mordaunt, afterwards Peterborough, and it appears even with William of Orange himself. He followed William to England in 1689.

With his return to London Locke's appearance as an author begins in England. In 1690 appeared both the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* and the *Two Treatises of Government*, the latter work anonymously. The *Letter concerning Toleration* had appeared in its Latin form (*Epistola de Tolerantia*) in 1685, but the English translation (by William Popple) appeared in London in 1689. This was also anonymous, and great was Locke's anger when he discovered subsequently that his friend Limborch had divulged his authorship, even to an intimate friend. It was never acknowledged by him except in his will. Locke is thus one of the great writers whose writings have appeared in advanced age, for in 1689 he was fifty-seven. But the entries in his common-place books and journals show that the *Essay* was in preparation ever since 1671, and had, as he said, been the subject of interrupted labours during his travels in France. There is evidence that a draft of it was seen by Shaftesbury before 1683, but it was finally prepared during his exile in Holland, where he had already published an

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abstract of it in his friend Leclerc's *Bibliographie Universelle* in 1689. Nothing is more interesting than to trace the preparation in Locke's mind for his authentic deliverances, and the papers preserved to us show rather how early than how late the central ideas of his various doctrines took shape. Of particular interest are writings which the industry of Mr. Fox Bourne has discovered among the Shaftesbury papers, written by Locke at various times and bearing specially on his views of religious liberty. One of these dates from 1660: 'Whether the civil magistrate may lawfully impose and determine the use of indifferent things in reference to religious worship'; which shows Locke's impatience of the intolerance shown by the Puritans, and the hopes, doomed to disappointment, which he derived from the accession of Charles II. Another is a paper of 'Reflections on the Roman Commonwealth' (written before 1667), in which Numa is praised for his moderation in what he regarded as the requirements of religion. A still more important 'Essay concerning Toleration (1667)' published in full by Mr. Fox Bourne anticipates almost completely the *Letter*. It exhibits the same desire towards non-interference of the civil power with religion, exposing also the folly of such interference; the same desire for

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a comprehensive religion which should unite all sects in one national church; the same exception from toleration of atheists and also of sects like the Catholic in so far as they set up another temporal authority against the civil authority of the land. The main outlines of Locke's famous *Letter* have become part and parcel of our ordinary political thinking, and this diminishes our interest in it and perhaps leads us to forget the audacity and originality, which, though the *Letter* had precedents in previous writers in England and in the practice of Holland, we must still acknowledge in it, and which gave it its influence over the mind of Europe. All the more value attaches to the earlier writings which enable us to detect the existence of these doctrines in the history of Locke's own mind.

Locke's years from 1690 to 1704, or at least from 1691, were spent in semi-retirement in Essex, varied by public business in London. He held office under the Crown as Commissioner of Appeals for eleven or twelve years, and in the more important office of a Commissioner of Trade from 1695, in which office he received a salary of £1000. He accepted this last office only under pressure. He appears to have been in fact the chief member of the Board, and projected im-

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portant work in promotion of Irish linen manufacture and of reform of the poor laws, though his proposals in these respects were not put into effect. His inability to bear the London winter led to an early resignation which Somers pressed him to reconsider, but he finally withdrew from office in 1700. His influence was, however, not confined to his official work. In the early years of William's reign, letters from Somers show how much value was set upon his advice. One incident of peculiar interest occurred in 1689, when he was offered the post of ambassador to Frederick I. the Elector of Brandenburg. Again his good genius persuaded him to decline, on the pretext of his weak health, the cold climate, and his inability to support the 'warm drinking' necessary in those parts for one who was to make himself acceptable. And though he was invited to go to Vienna instead, Locke persisted in his refusal. William showed the value he set upon Locke's services by summoning him urgently at a later date from Essex in the winter, for some purpose not sufficiently made out, but probably again of a diplomatic character; but the summons cost Locke several days of severe illness. During these later years Locke concerned himself largely with economic questions. In 1692, he published

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anonymously some letters (addressed, Mr. Fox Bourne thinks, to Somers) on 'The consequences of the lowering of interest and raising the value of money' which had reference to a proposal that had been made to lower the rate of interest by law, and to the serious problem of the depreciation of the currency which caused Locke great anxiety. When Lowndes, the Secretary to the Treasury, made a proposal in 1695 for raising the value of money, Locke returned to the subject and rendered service to Somers and Montague, who had consulted him, in their legislation for reform of the coinage. In this year also some strictures which Locke had written, on the Licensing Act (which maintained the censorship of the press) were read in a conference of the two Houses, and helped towards the demolition of the Act.

Locke's country residence was at Oates, in Essex, where he finally took up his abode in 1691, in the house of Sir Francis Masham, as soon as he could persuade that gentleman, at whose house Locke had frequently been a visitor, to accept him as a permanent guest upon suitable terms. Masham's wife was the daughter of Cudworth the Cambridge Platonist, with whose family Locke had long been on terms of friendship. Lady Masham devoted herself with unfailing affection to her friend,

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whose declining years and fragile health she cheered, with her intellectual companionship. Her letter to Leclerc, written after Locke's death, is a principal source of our knowledge of his life. Masham's daughter Esther (his child by a former wife) became a great friend of Locke, and a lively correspondence passed when either was away from home between 'Laudabridis' and 'Joannes.' While at Oates, Locke carried on the greater part of the immense literary work of his later life. The details may be mentioned briefly. A second letter concerning Toleration had appeared in 1690, in answer to a criticism of the first by Jonas Proast, and the long third letter published in 1692, was a rejoinder to Proast's rejoinder. In 1693 Locke published his *Thoughts concerning Education*, containing the substance of letters written from Holland to his friend Clarke about the education of Clarke's son. Locke used his medical knowledge with much effect in the earlier part of his treatise. The general body of the work reveals his sagacious care for the growth of character, and his aversion to studies calculated to cultivate address, rather than progress in knowledge. In all the methods of education, he looked to their effect upon the pupil's mind. But he put virtue and practical wisdom first and learning

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last.¹ Probably Locke under-rates the value of learning as itself a means of educating character—the topic on which it was reserved for Herbart to insist. But his work deserves its place in educational literature for its wisdom and sense of life, and it has the historical importance of having affected the *Emile* of Rousseau. Locke was engaged continually in modifying the *Essay*, of which a second edition appeared in 1694, and a much amended fourth edition in 1700. In 1695, he published anonymously his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (followed by two ‘Vindications’ of it). Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, recognised in the writer of this work the author of the *Essay*; and when Toland, the deistical writer, published next year his *Christianity not Mysteriorious*, which he professed to found upon Locke’s *Essay*, attacked the *Essay* itself by way of a defence of the Trinity against Toland and the Unitarians. Locke replied to Stillingfleet’s attacks in a series of letters, between 1697 and

¹ R. H. Quick (*Educational Reformers*), observes that this work should be read in connection with the *Conduct of the Understanding*, where instead of considering subjects of study from the point of view of their usefulness for a young gentleman (as in the *Thoughts*), Locke considers them as means of training, and urges that the value of study is to enable the youth to use his reason for himself hereafter.

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1699, which supplemented in certain respects, the doctrine of the *Essay*, and overwhelmed his opponent with argument and irony. Of Locke's posthumous writings the most important philosophically are a paper on Malebranche and *The Conduct of the Understanding*.

Many friends came to see Locke during his retirement at Oates, or received visits from him. Among these was Newton, between whom and Locke there subsisted a real affection. Locke took some part in securing for Newton his appointment at the Mint. But Newton was not always easy to deal with. Once, in consequence of prolonged insomnia (due to dozing by the fire in his room), he imagined a grievance against Locke. A reader who remembers the greatness of the two men will find something very touching in the letter in which Newton contritely asks forgiveness for entertaining and expressing an evil opinion of his friend, and in Locke's reply of surprise and generous affection. Another friend of this later time, whom the *Essay* brought him, was William Molyneux, 'the ingenious gentleman' of the *Essay* 'whom I am proud to call my friend,' an Irish patriot before Swift, who introduced the *Essay* into Trinity College, Dublin, where it was to be read shortly by the young

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Berkeley, and has ever since remained a textbook. Molyneux' discussion of the *Essay* helped Locke to several amendments, and he visited Locke at Oates. Another new friend was Anthony Collins, a young neighbouring squire, who afterwards wrote one of the best known of the deistical writings. Locke took a warm interest in a relation of his, Peter King, a young lawyer and member of Parliament, who became his sole executor. It was King's descendant, Lord Chancellor King, who published in 1829 the *Life of John Locke*. Still another young friend deserves mention, Pierre Coste, French tutor to the boy Francis Masham, who wrote of Locke in Bayle's magazine *Les Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*. Locke died on the 28th of October 1704, and was buried in the churchyard at High Laver, the parish where he used to attend service.

Locke's capacity of friendship, which included love of children and young people, is apparent from his whole history. Lady Masham and Coste have left us a charming and amiable picture of his personality—'his singular humanity and good breeding, which made him alike conversible with all sorts of people,' and made him lead people to talk of what they understood best; his fondness of raillery and banter, 'though rarely if ever, to

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the least offence of any person, but rather to dwell on some very slight fault, or else that which was usually commendable and for their honour to be known'; his wit in conversation; his kindness and charity, which, however, were always directed to encourage industry. 'He was a great lover of economy, and an exact keeper of accounts' and he was very neat in his dress and habits, without any affectation or singularity. He was quick-tempered and sometimes against unfair assailants he did not conceal his anger, but he was easily appeased. When some one quoted in his hearing some words of Horace, 'Ah,' said Locke, 'I am like Horace in both these things.' I love the warmth of the sun, and though I am prone to be angry, my hot temper soon goes down.'

If we had not his letters and the testimony of these friends, we could easily guess from the style of his writing and particularly of the *Essay* what manner of man he was. It suggests a man sagacious, cautious, skilled in the knowledge of men and regardful above all things of what it concerns man's happiness to know and to be, a foe to 'enthusiasm,' but of broad spirit and sympathy. He writes leisurely, as if he were talking out of a full mind; determined to see things clearly; anxious to make his meaning plain; yet not over-care-

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ful of precision, but content, as a man of the world, to allow one part of his discourse to supply the qualification of another part. Prolix his style is, exceeding the measure of our less spacious times, and when it is controversial, protracted into tediousness. Its uniform level is diversified here and there by phrases of striking and even pungent wit ('God when he makes the prophet doth not unmake the man'), more often by quiet humour ('every drowsy nod shakes their doctrine who teach that the soul is always thinking') or irony, which is always courteous (and therefore more effective) except when it is directed against an unworthy criticism. It betrays little imagination, though occasionally there is a touch of tenderness and fancy as in the passage: 'The ideas as well as children of our youth often die before us; and our minds represent those tombs to which we are approaching; where though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time and the imagery moulders away'; or when he allows himself to consider the possibility of continuous grades of spirits in the world, though there the imagination belongs rather to the thought than to the style. Often there are passages of sustained eloquence like the concluding pages of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. But

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its general tone is that of equable common-sense, without emphasis, without enthusiasm, restrained in its judgment, careful of measure, never dull but reflecting evenly from a candid surface, modest when it is most original, because concerned with the faithful presentment of things, rather lambent than fiery, an inspired pedestrianism.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY—(THE *ESSAY*)

NOTHING enables us so well to understand the meaning of a philosophic writer as to know the spirit in which he undertook his inquiries, and it is fortunate for us that the more personal and autobiographical method of writers like Descartes, Locke, and Spinoza (in one of his treatises) and others, admits us into this secret. Locke's spirit is that of criticism. The method of criticism in philosophy is principally associated with the name of Kant, who avowed and described it. It is the method of determining the limits of our knowledge by an inquiry into the instrument. In this sense Locke has been rightly described as 'the first critical philosopher,' and different as his procedure was from Kant's, and different as was the outcome of their thinking, their affinity of spirit is profounder than their divergence. The words in which Locke describes, at the opening of the *Essay*, the occasion of his writing it remind us of the later words of Kant in his preface to the

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Critique of Pure Reason. 'I thought,' Locke says, 'that the first step towards satisfying several inquiries the mind of man was very apt to run into, was to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted. Till that was done I suspected we began at the wrong end and in vain sought for satisfaction in a quiet and sure possession of truths that most concerned us, whilst we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of being ; as if all that boundless extent were the natural and undoubted possession of our understandings, wherein there was nothing exempt from its decision, or that escaped its comprehension. Thus men extending their inquiries beyond their capacities, and letting their thoughts wander into those depths where they can find no sure footing, it is no wonder that they raise questions and multiply disputes, which, never coming to any clear resolution, are proper only to continue and increase their doubts, and confirm them at last in perfect scepticism. Whereas were the capacities of our understandings well considered, the extent of our knowledge once discovered and the horizon found which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things—between what is and what is not comprehensible by us—men would

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perhaps with less scruple acquiesce in the avowed ignorance of the one, and employ their thoughts and discourse with more advantage and satisfaction in the other.' With Locke the speculative impulse is an out-growth from practical needs. 'Our business here is not to know all things but those which concern our conduct.' He is persuaded that for two evils to which the mind is liable: scepticism which bids us doubt everything because there are some things which cannot be understood; and on the other hand extravagant pretensions to knowledge: there is but one cure, to know how much we can know. The *Essay* is thus a doctrine of the limits of knowledge.

All its multifarious inquiries converge to this end. The extent of knowledge is indeed the proper subject of only one book, the fourth and last. Knowledge is to Locke the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas, that is to say, of the objects of our understanding. A preliminary survey was therefore necessary of these ideas, and because to him words, the signs of ideas, were an index to the nature of ideas themselves, and the misuse of language was partly provoked by unclearness in our ideas, and partly provoked it, the study of ideas and the study of words are conjoined. These inquiries occupy the

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major part of the *Essay* in Books II. and III. It is a method Locke describes as the 'plain, historical method.' But history means to him not simply or primarily the record of the origin and growth of our ideas, but rather it has the sense in which Bacon and Aristotle used the word before him, and in which we still speak of Zoology as natural history. The history of our minds means a description of the contents of our mind as we find them, arranging them into sorts, and assigning them to their appropriate faculties. The second book of Locke's *Essay*, which is a survey of ideas, is in fact an inventory of our experience. But Locke does not distinguish the inquiry into the contents of our ideas from the inquiry into their origin, and hence arises one of the chief defects of the *Essay*. For in analysing our ideas into their simplest elements, which is his principal object, he implies and even says, that these simple elements exist first and that the more complex ones are constructed out of them. But the 'history' which may be true as a description and an analysis is not necessarily true as an account of the order of growth.

Locke's method has sometimes been described as psychological, and it has been made a charge against him as well as against his successors,

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Berkeley and Hume, that they give us psychology instead of philosophy. This charge is founded upon a misunderstanding of the spirit of their work. While they are founders of English psychology, their primary interest is 'philosophical or metaphysical, and they are only incidentally psychologists. The object of psychology is to describe the process by which the mind acquires its experiences. Necessarily such a classification as Locke gives of these experiences, referring them to the mental capacities by which we acquire them, supplies at the same time the material of a psychology. But Locke's object is to describe the different kinds of objects the mind thinks about; and in fact the processes of observation, perception, willing and the like, which are the subject-matter of psychology (a word which Locke himself does not employ), are for him merely one portion of the contents of human experience, that which he describes as ideas of reflection.

By 'idea' (a term which he borrows from Descartes) Locke means 'whatever is the object of the understanding, when a man thinks' or 'whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking.' It includes thus the simplest experiences like heat, and the most complex like

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those of civilisation or mathematical relations; and not merely experience of things, but of events, whether in the external world, or, like the process of conceiving, in the mind itself; not only ideas of particular things but general or abstract ideas. Careless as Locke's use of language is, there is never any doubt as to his use of this word. Sometimes he describes an idea by reference to the capacity which supplies it—an idea of sensation is thus an idea supplied by sense; sometimes by reference to its contents, as when he speaks of an idea of heat, in other words heat so far as it is experienced. They are objects of mind: they would not be what they are if they were not experienced; but they are objects still. They are in fact the appearances of things, in so far as these appearances are presented to the mind, or as Locke and his followers more often say 'are in the mind.' But he does not answer, because he does not raise, the question as to what the nature of these ideas is or how they arise. He is content to say that when a hot thing excites the skin and the movement is continued to the brain, it produces in the mind the idea of heat—in this case an idea of sensation or perception. He assumes that there is an external thing, and a mind, and that upon suitable occasion the mind apprehends

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an idea related to the thing. But while these ideas are for Locke appearances of things, they cannot be described as being identical with things in so far as the things appear to us under different aspects. The ideas are not attributes of the things themselves, they are to Locke copies of the things to which they refer. Locke insists that we can only know reality through ideas which are its copies, that ideas or their relations are the proper objects of mind, and in fact his whole effort is to determine just how much, in extent and in kind, these ideas can tell us of the real world which he assumes. The world of ideas constitutes therefore (to neglect certain qualifications to be mentioned hereafter) a body of representations of real things.

But while he thus assumes that the objects of mind are themselves mental in character Locke never describes them in the modern phrase of 'states of consciousness.' He never says (and does not believe) that we know nothing but our own states. He does indeed constantly speak of ideas as being 'in the mind,' and it is easy to find passages which suggest that the ideas are mental affections. 'The pictures drawn in our minds,' he says, 'of the ideas of memory' (what we should now call the images of memory) 'are laid in fading colours, and if not sometimes refreshed, vanish

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and disappear.' But it is clear that an idea of perception, *e.g.* the idea of a tree is not an affection of the mind in the same sense as the act of perception itself is. Nor does Locke, who maintains that mathematical ideas have a reality of their own, mean that a triangle is a mere affection of the mind which vanishes when we cease to think of it. Locke does not in the *Essay* raise the problem which is involved in this phrase affection or modification of mind—a problem which agitated the followers of Descartes; and when he meets it in his posthumous treatise on Malebranche he is impatient of it and pushes it aside. To have the modification of mind involved in seeing the purple colour of a violet (Malebranche called this sensation a 'sentiment' in distinction from the idea), is the same thing as 'to have the idea of purple in my mind.' To Locke what is important is that 'when we think of a colour or a figure which we did not think of before there is some alteration in the mind.' But how we come to have ideas he cannot explain. 'I see or perceive or have ideas when it pleases God that I should, but in a way that I cannot comprehend.' The phrase, that ideas are in the mind, cannot therefore be pressed—it might be replaced by the phrase, ideas are before the mind. The word 'idea,'

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therefore, contains for Locke no theory; it means simply an object of the understanding when we think. Unfortunately he also did not inquire what was involved in assigning to ideas a twilight existence between the things they represent and the mind which understands them. That he did not do so is a philosophical defect, but if we are to apprehend his meaning, we must beware of importing into his philosophy doctrines that he does not maintain.

Let us follow Locke in his inventory of ideas. They may be distinguished, in the first place, according to their 'original.' All our ideas, all the materials of our thought and knowledge, are derived directly or indirectly from experience, and from two sources of it, sensation and reflection. External sensible objects supply us with the one set of ideas, ideas of sensation; our own operations about the ideas got by sensation, when the mind comes to reflect upon these operations, supply us with the other set, the ideas of reflection: such ideas as the acts of perceiving, willing, thinking, feeling. Apart from experience, then, directly or indirectly received, the mind is to Locke a white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas, a *tabula rasa*; or it is compared to a dark cabinet into which the senses let in light.

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That we have no innate ideas, no objects of experience not derived from these two sources, is the implied doctrine, the subject-matter of Book I., whose significance may be deferred. Nor does the mind think, except so far as it has ideas before it; we cannot say with Descartes that because the essence of mind is to think, the mind is always actually thinking. 'Every drowsy nod shakes their doctrine who declare that the mind thinks always.' But, while the mind is passive in respect of these two sources of experience, sensation and reflection, the mind is also active: it can attend, it can compare, distinguish and abstract. Hence arises the first important classification of ideas into two classes—simple and complex ideas. Simple ideas are the ultimate constituents of experience, the uncompounded appearances of things; complex ideas are the workmanship of the mind. Simple ideas are either the ideas of the sensible qualities of things derived by sensation of all kinds, the ideas of whiteness, heat and the like, or else they are the ideas of the operations of our minds which come to us by reflection, or else they are like pleasure or pain or existence, ideas which convey themselves into the mind by sensation or reflection indifferently, 'by all the ways of sensation and reflection.'

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tion.' These simple elements of experience the mind can neither make nor destroy, it can only receive; had we fewer or more senses we should receive fewer or more such ideas. Among simple ideas of sensation the most important distinction is that between the ideas of the primary qualities and the ideas of the secondary qualities of bodies—a distinction inherited by Locke from Descartes but introduced into philosophy, in its modern shape, by Galileo. Extension, figure, number, motion or rest, solidity,—these are qualities which bodies possess no matter what changes they undergo. Pound an almond or melt wax, the colours may change, but some figure and extension they still have. These qualities, then, are powers in bodies themselves, and really in them, whether any one's senses perceive them or no; in virtue of which they produce exactly corresponding ideas in us. But secondary qualities, like colour, taste, and smell, which change with varying circumstances, which may vanish for example with the absence of illumination, or be unfelt by a person who suffers from a cold, or may change in character according to the condition of the percipient, are not qualities in bodies themselves, but are powers which they possess of producing certain ideas in us, in virtue of their

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internal structure; that is, in virtue of the primary qualities of the insensible particles of which they are composed, for Locke assumes material bodies to be ultimately atomic in structure. It may be added that there is a third sort of qualities of bodies, powers which they possess to affect other external bodies, like the power of the sun to melt wax. It is these last which are commonly called powers. The ideas of the secondary qualities are, therefore, in one important respect, unlike those of the primary qualities; they do not resemble anything in the object, though popular thought thinks that bodies are in themselves red or sweet, in the same way as they are extended.

Simple ideas of reflection may be grouped under the two heads of thinking and willing. Sensible objects give us ideas. The acts of the mind, as engaged upon these ideas, give us the ideas of reflection by a kind of inner sense. Perception is the simplest operation we can thus be aware of, for apparently the act of sensation is nothing but bodily motion in the brain; the simplest idea of sensation is really an idea of perception. Retention, discrimination, comparison, abstraction (which puts a limit between man and brutes), are other examples. It is characteristic of Locke's imperfect consideration of what an idea is, that,

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while strictly speaking, it is only 'retention' or 'memory' itself that should be an idea of reflection, he yet constantly speaks of remembered objects as ideas of reflection; though, in itself, a remembered person is no more an object of reflection than a perceived person. By doing so he seems to make the inner sense not only a source of ideas of mental operations, but a source of ideas which are not operations at all but in some sense a special mental reduplication of ideas of sensation—a doctrine full of fatal significance for subsequent thought.

The complex ideas introduce distinctions which present at once more interest and greater difficulty. They are the voluntary creations of the mind, which manipulates the materials derived from sensation and reflection; or they might be described as resolvable into these elements together with an active element of construction referable to the mind itself. Locke distinguishes three sorts, Modes, Substances, and Relations, of which Modes and Relations stand on an altogether different footing from Substances. Modes are complex ideas like jumping, triangle, gratitude, which are not regarded as self-subsistent but as affections of substances. They are either simple, or mixed, according as their simple con-

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stituents are of the same or different sorts. Thus, twelve is a mere repetition of unity; beauty is resolvable into the heterogeneous elements of colour, figure, pleasure, etc. Simple modes are thus variations of one simple idea—*e.g.* the different figures of extension, different sorts of motion, different numbers. One particularly interesting mode is infinity or immensity, whether of space or duration, which we get by (or is resolvable into) the addition of unit to unit and joining to this the negative idea that the process of addition may be carried on without limit, never coming to an end. Anticipating the more famous discussion of the same problem by Kant, Locke denies infinity to be a positive idea—there is no idea of a positive completed infinite—‘you cannot adapt a standing measure to a growing bulk.’ The chief examples of mixed modes (those which are resolvable into heterogeneous elements) are to be found in moral ideas, *e.g.* motive, justice. It is true that combinations of qualities in the real world may correspond to these ideas, or even suggest them. But in themselves they are put together arbitrarily by the mind, and the important consequence follows (for these and simple modes as well), that they have no standard external to themselves with which they can be com-

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pared: they are their own archetypes, they are their own guarantee of reality. This same account applies to ideas of Relation, such as relation of king and subject, identity, cause and effect, and the like. All of them 'terminate in simple ideas,' are 'concerned with their simple ideas,' and are products of the mind's activity in considering them, 'so as to carry its view from one to the other.' Some of the more special sorts of relations, and in particular moral relations, will occupy us later.

The ideas of Substances are of a different nature. They, too, are the workmanship of the mind. We find a number of ideas of simple qualities going together in our experience, and we combine these ideas together under a single name, and regard them as belonging to one thing, but we also go on to suppose some support or substratum to the qualities in the thing which produces these simple ideas in us. We do not know what that support is, any more than the Indian philosopher Locke loves to quote, who declared that the world was supported by an elephant, the elephant by a tortoise, and the tortoise by he knew not what. This obscure idea of some support we know not what is the idea we have of substance in general, and 'it is the same every-

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where.¹ A particular kind of substance is then nothing but a group of simple ideas, regarded as so supported, and as flowing from the internal constitution of this unknown somewhat.

The Church, in the person of the Bishop of Worcester, alleged, in alarm for the doctrine of the Trinity, that Locke was almost discarding substance out of the world. Locke could answer easily enough, that so far from discarding it, he had catalogued it, vague as it was, in his inventory of experience, and had explained what kind of an idea it was. Locke might have been more embarrassed if he had been asked to explain how the mind could not only group together simple ideas as the ideas of one thing, but was able to invent the new idea of a support however indefinite. He was content to note in his inventory the existence of this idea without more narrowly analysing its nature.

But two consequences he drew from his account of substance, which are of great importance. The first is, that the idea of a spiritual substance is no less clear than that of a material one. A material substance is the unknown support of sensible qualities; spiritual substance is the unknown support of the qualities corresponding to the

¹ First letter to the Bishop of Worcester.

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ideas of reflection. At the same time, this victorious conclusion needs to be qualified. Bodies and souls are alike the unknown supports of attributes. But bodies to Locke have a microscopic atomic constitution: a notion familiar to him from the speculations of Gassendi, or indeed from those of Bacon. It is but the coarseness of our senses and of our intelligence which conceals this constitution from us. Spirits more finely endowed than ours, like the angels', may penetrate further than ours into the constitution of bodies. But in regard to the soul, there is a peculiar obscurity. A substance it is, but we do not know whether it is an immaterial substance, or merely a material substance to which God has attached the power of thinking. The first hypothesis may be the more probable, and only those 'whose thoughts are immersed in matter' find it harder to conceive a spiritual than a bodily substance. But though God Himself, from whom all proceeds, is certainly an immaterial substance, there is no contradiction in the second hypothesis, which holds Him to have added thought to certain systems of senseless matter. 'All the great ends of worship and religion are well enough secured without philosophical proofs of the soul's immateriality.' The identity of the soul, whichever view be

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taken of it, consists in the identity of consciousness.

The second conclusion is of a different nature. A distinction was current in the schools, between the real essence of substances and the nominal essence or definition. Locke spends himself in argument to prove that we know only nominal essences, and that they are the names of sorts of things by which we identify a particular thing as belonging to a class,—they are groups of ideas connected together by names. They are thus general ideas formed by abstraction. The real essence is ‘that real constitution of anything, which is the foundation of the qualities combined in the nominal essence,’—it is to him that minute microscopic constitution, from which the obvious sensible qualities combined in the definition are supposed to flow. This real essence of things we do not know, because our senses fail to carry us so far. It follows, to anticipate a little, that our knowledge of substances is confined to the abstract collections of ideas which are signified by the general names of substances.

Our brief *résumé* of the chief titles in Locke’s inventory of experience is not intended to do more than indicate the wealth of detailed description which makes the second book of the *Essay*

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a storehouse of metaphysical and psychological knowledge. Nor does it attempt at all to follow Locke in his survey of words in the third book. But we may conveniently stop for a moment, before passing on to consider Locke's theory of knowledge, in order to review the picture here presented of the ideas which we possess, the objects of our mind when we think. They are all resolvable into two kinds of simple experiences, ideas of sense qualities, and of mental operations. These simple ideas all correspond to the real things, whose existence Locke assumes, and which are supposed to produce them in our minds: they are 'such perceptions as God has fitted us to receive, and given power to external objects (he is speaking of simple ideas of sensation), to produce in us by established laws and ways, suitable to his wisdom and goodness, though incomprehensible to us.' They are in Locke's language real, adequate, and true. Some of them are exact copies of their originals, others do not resemble them. But they are but the materials of our experience. The finished objects of our experience are our own handiwork. On the one hand, we have a set of objects, of which the chief are mathematical and ethical constructions, which are real and adequate in their own right, self-

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contained because not fashioned according to any exemplar beyond them. These objects contain a wealth of properties, which may be drawn from them by demonstration. On the other hand we have substances, whether material things or minds, and these we do not experience in themselves, but only so far as we receive simple ideas from them. We are left then strangely with a twofold reality. There is one reality, which belongs to certain of our ideas, like the mathematical ones, because they are wholly of our making. There is another reality of substances which supply us with the ideas that we receive from them ; which are behind the veil of the appearances by which we know them. This reality we know only partially, and cannot thoroughly know.

This survey of ideas anticipates the answer to the problem of the limits of knowledge, which it was Locke's main object to solve. Knowledge, as already explained, is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas. Ideas are but the elements of knowledge, we have knowledge when we perceive their connections. What is known is thus ideas in their connection. According to Locke, the connection may be one of four kinds. It may be that of identity or diversity, as when we perceive that white is white, and is not

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black; or of relation, *e.g.* three is greater than two; or co-existence, *e.g.* gold is 'fixed,' which means the co-existence of fixedness with the defining qualities of gold; or lastly, there is a fourth kind of agreement or disagreement, 'that of actual real existence agreeing to an idea,' which may be reserved for later explanation.

Knowledge so defined, to be really knowledge, is either directly or indirectly intuitive. Direct intuition is the immediate perception of such agreement or disagreement: it is immediate certainty—'irresistible,' 'like bright sunshine'; and on it all certainty of knowledge depends. Indirect intuition is demonstration, where our ideas are brought into relation by the mediation of a third, each step in the demonstration being itself intuitive. Supposing that there could be innate ideas and principles which the mind brings along with it, their intuitive character would accordingly not serve to distinguish them from any other kind of knowledge which is knowledge in the strict sense. But there are three questions which may profitably be asked about knowledge, concerned as it is with ideas. How far does it extend? How far is it real or conformable to things? How much can it tell us of actual existence?

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The answer to the first two questions turns entirely on the difference between ideas of substances and all other ideas. Our senses are not acute enough to tell us of the primary qualities of the minute particles of bodies, nor our intelligence to inform us of the structure composed by these particles. We can therefore neither know why the body produces in us the ideas of certain qualities included in their nominal essence, nor, what is more important, what is the connection between these qualities themselves, and consequently between these qualities and other qualities which we may discover in them. Further we have to remember, as Locke says in a striking passage, that substances do not stand alone, but are related to one another, and dependent for their qualities on remote causes which may be unperceived. 'Separate a piece of gold from all other bodies, and it would lose all its colour and weight and perhaps malleableness too.' 'We see and perceive some of the actions and grosser operations of things here about us, but whence the streams come that keep all these curious machines in motion and repair, how conveyed and modified, is beyond notice and apprehension. . . . Things, however absolute and entire they seem in themselves, are but retainers to other parts of nature

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for that which they are most taken notice of by us.'

It is plain then that our knowledge cannot extend beyond our ideas, but also that it must fall short of the range of our ideas, whenever we fail to bring our ideas into relation with one another. Thus though we have an idea of matter and of thinking we may never be able to know whether matter thinks. We are limited in our knowledge of the co-existence of qualities in bodies because we do not know the ultimate constitution of things. We can go little further than our experience. And if this is true of bodies, it is still more true of spirits which are only known in our persons, while we know nothing of other possible spirits in the universe, but can only conjecture. Whereas the extent of our knowledge of mathematical and moral relations appears to be indefinite and inexhaustible.

When we ask how far our knowledge is real or true—how far, that is, it differs from mere imagination and conforms to things—the answer is similar. Mathematical and moral knowledge, since these ideas are their own archetypes, is real and true. But our ideas of substances are referred to archetypes existing beyond ideas. Our knowledge of them can only therefore be true so far as it is

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founded upon experience and sensible observations. Hence, to state the same thing otherwise, the important result that a definite limit is set to our acquisition of universal knowledge. So far as ideas are abstract their agreement or disagreement will constitute universal knowledge; wherever therefore, as in mathematics, we have abstract ideas we can obtain universal knowledge. Now of substances we know only their nominal essences. These are abstract, but we can derive very little further knowledge from them because, as explained, not knowing the constitution of things, we do not know the connection between the qualities which make up the nominal essence. We are then limited to the particular knowledge of substances derived from particular experiences. Such generalisations as we can make as to the co-existence of their properties, wanting as they are in adequate foundation, do not amount to more than probability, useful enough for practice, but falling short of science. They are not matter of knowledge but of judgment. Science, which is universal, is thus only possible in the unfolding of an abstract idea, and consequently Locke is 'apt to doubt a science of physical bodies as out of our reach'; our physical knowledge is at best empirical.

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The inadequacy of our knowledge of substances is plainer still if we ask ourselves what are the things of which we are warranted in holding not merely that they are real or true like mathematics but that they have actual existence. At first sight it might seem difficult to understand how, if knowledge is the perception of the agreement of ideas, we can have knowledge of actual existence at all. For actual existence outside the world of ideas is not itself an idea and cannot be compared with other ideas. But what Locke means is clear enough: it is the undoubted fact that certain ideas come to us with a 'coefficient of reality,' as it has been called, a 'tang' which distinguishes them from mere ideas or imaginations. They carry us beyond the mere idea to something else, which is what we call real existence. There are two such ideas of whose existence we may have certainty: ourselves and God. Of our own existence we have intuitive knowledge; to doubt it is, in Descartes' language which Locke accepts, to be assured of it in the very act of doubting. Of God's existence we have demonstrative knowledge. For I myself exist; there must therefore be some real being to account for my beginning to be, and this real being must exist from all eternity (or it too would have had

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a beginning and therefore a further cause). Moreover this being as the source of all our powers and knowledge must be most powerful and most knowing—in a word, it is God. The pungency of my own existence is thus by this argument communicated through the principle of causality to God. But Locke, though he regards it as an intuitive truth that nothing can begin to be except it is produced by some real thing, does not ask himself how the idea of causation, gathered according to his own account from the suggestion of connected changes in things, can be extended so as to apply to a cause like God which never can be presented in sensible or reflective experience.

Of the existence of ourselves and of God we have thus, according to Locke, complete conviction. When we turn to material things, we find that while we can at pleasure call up or lay by the ideas of memory or fancy, we are passive in respect of external objects. When we look at the sun, we cannot avoid having the idea of light. There must needs be 'some exterior cause which produces these ideas in my mind whether I will or no.' Moreover a present material thing affects us with a certain force or vivacity which distinguishes it from a mere imagination. It is the difference between seeing the sun by day and think-

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ing of it by night. To the objector who urges that the fire may be all a dream, Locke never tires of begging him 'to dream this answer'; that there is a manifest difference between dreaming of being in the fire and being actually in it, and at any rate the pain of the second experience makes the difference between our weal and woe, and determines us practically. Such knowledge Locke calls sensitive knowledge. It is less than intuition and is therefore less than knowledge proper, but it is more than mere 'judgment.' Our knowledge of the nature of sensible things is thus the particular knowledge of our observations of them, and our knowledge of their actual existence is the sensible experience of their presence so long as they are present; or it may be added, the memory that they were once so sensibly perceived.

What falls outside the range of knowledge thus described belongs to the sphere of judgment or probability, and it thus includes the greater part of our beliefs and the propositions we make, in particular the greater part of what is thought to constitute physical science. It supplies what is necessary for conduct, where the conviction or intuition necessary for knowledge fails us. Such propositions are attended not by certainty but by assent. The mind puts ideas together, when their

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agreement is not perceived, but only presumed. It may do this in respect of matter of fact, either because of conformity to our own observation, or the ground of probability may be the testimony of others. In matters which are not open to the observation of the senses, like the minute constitution of things, we rely in our judgments upon analogy. The strength of our assent varies in degree according to various circumstances, the concurrence of testimony, the agreement of testimony with experience, the remoteness of the testimony and the like. But Locke has supplied no rules by which we may judge the relative probability of judgments, such as are offered by 'inductive' logic.

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS ON THE *ESSAY*

LIKE other great writers and thinkers, Locke leaves many strands of thought not woven into one perfect tissue; loose ends are not connected, gaps are left to be filled in the structure. It is not difficult to point out these defects, and his successors were occupied in overcoming them. But it is more helpful to begin by indicating certain features of the *Essay* which are impressive by their fertility of suggestion.

1. The general character of his method, in reviewing the contents of experience as a means towards indicating the limits of knowledge, follows the habit of the practical man, which begins with certain loose assumptions that, in the course of the inquiry, take on a changed aspect and receive a new signification. Locke's assumption of real substances, to which knowledge conforms in various degrees, is easy enough to criticise. If the only objects of our minds are ideas, how can things which are not themselves ideas be made

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the object of thought, still less be compared with ideas? The answer is that Locke, insisting on the philosophical doctrine that all the objects of our thought are mental in the sense before defined, is content to assume side by side with these the existence of minds and of material things. But things which at the beginning of the *Essay* are the mysterious causes of our ideas turn out in the end to be merely the limits of our knowledge.¹ Step by step as he proceeds in the inquiry the material thing receives definition. The ideas of the primary qualities are exact copies of the primary qualities themselves, or in other words, in certain vital respects the contents of the real object are the same as those of the representative one. The secondary qualities are still as in the thing entirely unlike their ideas. But even this apparent breach is narrowed. For the ultimate nature of the thing is held to be a structure of particles insensible to us, and were our senses and our intelligence acute enough to know the primary qualities of these particles and the plan of their combination, we should have an exact representation of the thing. 'The now secondary qualities of bodies would disappear if we could

¹ The same observation is true of Kant, though Kant's result is different.

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discover the primary ones of their minute parts. . . . We should see an admirable texture of parts of a certain size and figure.’¹ The sensible qualities and the gross superficial (macroscopic) primary ones would be replaced by microscopic primary ones. Were this result but attained (and we must add, the connection of things with other things also observed), knowledge would be entirely adequate. For though our knowledge would still be of ideas, there would be nothing in the things themselves which would not have its exact counterpart in ideas, except the unknown something which makes the difference between ideas and actual things. Ultimately therefore the limit to our knowledge of things is set by our defective sense and intelligence. Though no finite spirit which knows only by ideas could behold reality face to face, reality is in the end something not remote from ideas, for it corresponds to them, and it is but our deficiencies which prevent us from knowing it, as far as it can be known at all. Locke declines the question of the real constitution of spirit, whether it is an immaterial substance or a material substance to which is attached the power of thinking. But he speaks of ‘thinking and willing as primary

¹ *Essay*, Book II., ch. xxiii. § 11.

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qualities of spirit.'¹ Had he asked himself what reason there was for supposing thinking as in the mind to be different from the thinking which we apprehend—the idea of thinking—he might have seen that his separation of ideas in general from things was needless.

2. One of Locke's cardinal merits is his insistence that no mere words shall take the place of a clear description of the contents of our experience, or shall make us think that we have ideas which we cannot find in our experience. Books I. to III. are a long descant upon this theme. And it is this which gives point to a famous portion of Locke's theory which we have not yet described, his denial of innate ideas whether in thinking or in morals. In the abstract which he wrote of the *Essay* for Leclerc's *Bibliothèque Universelle* he omits this topic which occupies the whole first Book of the *Essay*, with the remark that it was designed to overcome the prejudices entertained against the belief that the mind was *tabula rasa*. Readers of the *Essay* are often provoked with what they think the triviality of Locke's attempted refutation of innate ideas, amounting, they think, to little more than the proof that we do not have these ideas at birth, and that we acquire them

¹ *Essay*, Book II., ch. xxiii. § 30.

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only by experience, after we have acquired other portions of knowledge no less evident. Such innate ideas, it is urged, are not those which Lord Herbert of Cherbury assumed, or Descartes intended by his innate ideas, nor are they such as have been intended by others after Locke who, admitting that experience is needed to evoke these principles to explicit operation, have urged that they themselves are implicit in the mind. Now it was just this conception of implicit knowledge which Locke desired to repudiate. 'To imprint anything on the mind without the mind's perceiving it seems to me hardly intelligible.' Whatever is in the mind must be discoverable there, and he thought that the notion of innate principles clouded the issue with words and substituted empty language for the real effort to discover ideas. He did not deny the truth or the self-evidence of these principles, and he even thought them useful as a means of avoiding sophistry in controversy. Still less did he maintain that the mind itself though a white paper to the world of objects was itself a passive instrument. But he claimed, and he claimed rightly, that the mind should not be credited with mysterious knowledge, not verifiable as an idea, and his answer is still valid against those who would endow the mind with methods

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of envisaging objects (categories and the like) which it imports into the object itself. It is this consideration, that what is claimed to be a factor in experience must be found there and catalogued in the inventory, which gives its philosophical importance to Locke's polemic. And it is therefore not strange, that the attack upon innate ideas should have come to be that part of Locke's teaching which the public connected habitually with his name.

So far as Locke himself attempted the problem raised by such 'categories' of thought, and he did not seriously attempt it, he supplied indications of a better way. He looked, for instance, for the relation of causality, or power, to experience itself, and crude and imperfect as his description of it is, he found it there. But he added that it is less obviously experienced in the relations of material bodies than in the operation of the mind itself when it wills the direction of its ideas, or controls the movement of its body—a just view though misunderstood, and therefore rejected, by Hume. So far, at least, he sought to find for what afterwards were called categories their real counterparts in his experience. And what he did went but a little way. He never applied the same principle to the better understanding of the

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nature of substance from observation of the continuity of mental operations. Had he carried this line of thought a little further, he might have recognised in the structure of the system of ideas, whether of sense or reflection, certain fundamental ideas which form the skeleton of the structure and have thus a prerogative place in experience.

3. Locke's declaration that physical science is impossible, because universal knowledge can only be derived from abstract ideas, is notable because it makes mathematics the ideal of scientific thought. Compared with mathematics, physics as a collection of empirical knowledge supplies only probability. He stands thus in strong contrast with those of his successors (like J. S. Mill) who, attempting to put mathematics on an empirical basis, have sought to reduce it to the level of the physical sciences. At the same time Locke's doctrine, that if there is to be physical science at all it must be derived from the investigation of abstract ideas, has been the parent of much similar thought, and it is revived without Locke's pessimism as to physics in a doctrine which at the present time is at any rate highly accredited, that scientific conceptions and truths are convenient abstractions which happen to be attested and verified by facts, but are themselves merely

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creations of the mind, which serve as a shorthand or compendious description of physical data. Both Locke's doctrine and its modern counterpart have their characteristic difficulties. Locke held that mathematics, while derived from the construction of mind, is no mere analysis of what was contained in certain conceptions, but led to new truths: it discovered not 'trifling' or 'verbal' but 'instructive' propositions. But he neither inquired what compulsive force there was in figures or numbers which drove their investigators into fresh discovery, nor how or in what sense these abstract creations could be exemplified in the world of fact. The same difficulties may be objected to the current revival of Locke's doctrine in physical science.

The last topic naturally leads on to the mention of some of Locke's palpable defects, which not all his cautious efforts to trace the boundaries between the enlightened and the dark parts of things can conceal. But Locke's defects had the value of stimulating the thought of his successors. Out of Locke grew not only Berkeley and Hume, but indirectly Kant and Reid. These defects turn upon one or two main points—his imperfect connection and imperfect disconnection of the mind and external things, the individualistic character

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of his philosophy, his oversight of the central fact of continuity.

1. The antithesis between the two kinds of realities, the constructions of the mind and substances, raises at once difficulties which Locke never resolved. Mathematical figures, to take them as incontestable examples of modes, owe their elements to sense, but their construction to the mind. Now Locke admits that moral ideas, which he places on the same footing as mathematical ideas, may be gathered from observation. This is obviously true of mathematical ideas also. But how can it be more than a coincidence? He does not explain how mathematical and moral reality can be applicable to sensible reality. Modes are, indeed, defined as groups of ideas regarded not as independent, but as affections of substances. Yet in the sequel, they are treated as real in their own right, and floated off into an atmosphere of their own. At the same time Locke sees, as has just been noticed, that creatures as they are of the mind, they constrain us to think about them in certain ways as much as if they were sensible objects. And yet they do this, not because they correspond to anything in the nature of the mind, but because they are triangles or circles or moral ideas. They are as real

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as substances, but they have no actual existence, and yet they are exemplified in the world of actual existence.' It was this problem left unsolved or rather unraised by Locke which Kant attempted (impelled no doubt in part by Locke), when he asked how mathematics can be true of the real world—or in the technical phrase how the synthetic propositions of mathematics are possible. His answer, or at least part of it, was that space and time were brought by the mind itself to experience. Whatever value can be attached to the solution, it was of the highest importance to raise the problem. Locke would have rejected the solution, but his own conception of mathematics and their place in experience prepared the way for it.

2. Locke's object was to describe the contents of experience, but his method was a mixture of description and assumption, and the severance of ideas from things as the mental copies of them arises from this defect. Had he described without assumption what he found in his mind, he would have discovered nothing but objects of various sorts; which he might have called ideas to indicate their relation to mind. There would have been substances, possibly vaguely apprehended, in which simple qualities inhered, but there would

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have been no world behind the ideas. But he assumed from common thought the existence of permanent things independent of our apprehensions of them, and he maintained with this the philosophical tenet derived from Descartes that the only objects we know must be ideas. The true proposition, that things show themselves to be related to mind in so far as we apprehend them, he converted like his teacher into the proposition that we do not know things directly but only through mental phantasms, which are not indeed mere affections of mind, but are suspended somewhere betwixt mind and real things, and sometimes dangerously approach the condition of mental affections. This is what Hume afterwards described as the philosophical invention of a twofold existence—a doctrine fathered by philosophy upon common-sense, but which common-sense does not entertain, because it has not faced the question. It is true that Locke himself, as has been insisted, cared little about the problems he had so raised, and that his whole interest lay in knowing how far these ideas could give us knowledge of their exemplars. But subsequent philosophy has employed itself with varying success in ridding itself of the phantasms which Descartes and Locke have conjured up. Locke

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himself saw that ideas of primary qualities stood in an intimacy of relation with their archetypes, which half destroyed their separateness. It was easy for Berkeley to show that there was no reason for preferring them to the ideas of secondary qualities in this respect. And therefore, he denied the existence of sensible things in Locke's sense, denied, that is, the distinction of sensible things from ideas of sensation. Reid took a different line, and insisted that our elementary experiences are judgments, that our sensations 'suggest' real external things, that is, are the occasions upon which we, according to a natural law, apprehend external things, of which we are therefore directly aware. Had Locke confined himself to ideas in his own sense, he would have recognised (as he does) that we experience both minds and sensible things, as supplied by reflection and sensation respectively; and that sensible things, while they claim a real existence, are mental in character in so far as they are inter-related with minds in the same universe and affect them.

3. One vital consequence followed from Locke's conception of ideas. So far as ideas are presented to (or are in the mind), these objects are the peculiar possession of the individual mind which thinks them. On the other hand, so far as they

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are always regarded as corresponding to some thing, which by God's good pleasure produces them, we tend to forget their individual character. Locke faithfully describes the world as he finds it, but because there is the background of independent real things, we forget that the ideas are relative only to the individual. Locke, in fact, invests his ideas with all the characters that belong to the real world of objects, which are not confined to one man's inspection, but are open to all. Strictly speaking, the ideas belong only to the individual, and Locke is ready to admit that this is so. The common use of language between man and man implies that they give the same names to corresponding ideas, but 'when he represents to himself other men's ideas by some of his own, if he consent to give them the same names that other men do, it is still to his own ideas.'¹ But when mental objects are thus individual, they fail of the universal character which we attribute to the objects of knowledge. To quote the famous example of Kant, there is a great difference between the experience that when I see the sun shine I feel the stone grow warm, and the experience that the sun warms the stone. The second proposition is knowledge, and is the

¹ *Essay*, Book III., ch. ii. § 2.

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common object of all; the first is part of the contents of the mind of an individual, or if we use the word 'history' in Locke's sense, it is part of the life-history of an individual. Strictly speaking, knowledge, as Locke conceives it, is part of the life-history of an individual. Such individualism is inevitable, if the objects we know, the ideas, are detached from the objects themselves. We can no more acquire common knowledge from putting together the life-histories of individuals, than we could get a state from putting together a number of purely self-seeking agents. It was Kant's great merit to have recognised this problem, though it by no means follows that we must accept his solution of it. What we may do is to deny the existence of ideas, as copies of things, and to recognise that we directly apprehend the things themselves.

4. Locke's individualism arose from his severing ideas from things. Had he, describing experience, omitted ideas or omitted things, he need not have been open to this charge. He can only bring mind and mind together by the happy accident that they think alike. But in another important respect he falls short of his own ideal of describing the contents of experience. He overlooks the fact of continuity. The objects of

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experience are to him fragmentary and disconnected. It is not strictly true to say, as has sometimes been said, that for him every idea must be gone as soon as apprehended. For ideas may contain the relations of persistence and identity. These relations are themselves part of our world of ideas. What is true is that the connections between ideas are external to them. Qualities are grouped together by the mechanical bond of an underlying support or substance. Effect follows cause in the external world in empirical succession. Ideas have identity 'when they vary not at all from what they were at that moment wherein we consider their former existence, and to which we compare the present,' *i.e.* their identity is not individual continuity but likeness of quality. The same account applies to all the other 'relations' between ideas which knowledge directly apprehends. For though when the ideas are 'considered together' their agreement or disagreement is not external but follows from the nature of the ideas, yet the ideas must first be 'considered together' for their relation to be perceived. Three is known to be greater than two, and white different from black as soon as they are compared, but there is nothing, so far as Locke's description goes, in

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three or in white, which compels us to compare them with two or with black. It is true that Locke is feeling after the real nature of causality when, as already mentioned, he seeks for it in the experience of our volitions. But to all intents and purposes, in spite of his urging the inter-relatedness of things, the world is to him a number of isolated atoms grouped together in the last resort by the good pleasure of God, as indeed his follower Berkeley explicitly affirmed. Locke's badinage of Malebranche's opinion that 'we see all things in God' is a good illustration of his insensibility to the cardinal fact of continuity. Malebranche had said that 'when we would think of anything in particular, we at first cast our view upon all beings,'—meaning that each thing is seen as a fragment or a limitation of the whole vague universe. 'I do not think,' says Locke, 'that my country neighbours, when they first wake in the morning, find it impossible to think of a lame horse they have, till they have run over in their minds "all beings" that are, and then pitch on dapple.'

The omission of continuity in the description of experience is a case of oversight—inexplicable enough, were it not that description is the most difficult of tasks, but shared with Locke by a long

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line of successors. The failure to recognise it led to frank scepticism in Hume, it led in Kant to attempts to overcome the disconnectedness of the world by mechanical inventions like the categories. The oversight was not confined to sensible things; it applied to the mind also. For the mind as described by Locke is as disconnected as the qualities of external things. There is nothing but the spiritual substance which supports the group or succession of mental operations. Locke overlooks the fact, as important and as plain to us as thinking or willing itself, that the mind's action is 'sensibly continuous.' It was not till recent years that the face of psychology was changed by substituting the experienced fact of mental continuity for the inherited conception or prejudice that the mind is known only as a series of mental events.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICS

LOCKE'S contribution to Ethics in the *Essay* is short, but it is remarkable. Good and evil are nothing but 'pleasure and pain or that which occasions pleasure and pain to us.' 'Moral good or evil then is only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law whereby good and evil are drawn on us from the will and power of the law-maker; which good or evil, pleasure or pain, attending our observance or breach of the law, by the decree of the law-maker, is that we call reward and punishment.' Moral good or evil is thus a relation of human actions, which are modes, to other modes which are rules of action. Locke enumerates three sorts of moral codes, with their enforcements or 'sanctions'—the divine law, 'which is the measure of sin and duty, given by God whether by revelation or the light of nature'; the civil law, the measure of crime and innocence; and the law of opinion, reputation or fashion, which is the measure of virtue or

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vice, these terms being partly coincident with the divine law, but only so far as the opinion of societies, tribes or clubs of men agrees with that law, which it in a great measure does. When we ask what the contents of the moral law are, Locke offers us a startling doctrine. 'The idea of a Supreme Being infinite in power, goodness and wisdom, whose workmanship we are and on whom we depend; and the idea of ourselves as understanding rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued afford such foundations of our duty and rules of action as might place morality amongst the sciences capable of demonstration; wherein I doubt not but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out.' The science which Aristotle regarded as less certain even than physical science Locke puts on the level of mathematics. He gives as illustration two propositions 'as certain as any demonstration in Euclid: 'where there is no property, there is no injustice'; and 'no government allows absolute liberty.' The complexity of moral ideas and their want of sensible representation are, he thinks, the reasons why as compared with mathematics morality is thought incapable of

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demonstration. Molyneux urged Locke to publish a treatise of Ethics based on this conception, and Locke seems to have entertained the idea of doing so, which was not however realised. How much he recognised that human reasoning unassisted by religion falls short of what is required by his ideal of Ethics may be seen from a passage of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. 'Experience shows that the knowledge of morality by mere natural light (how agreeable soever it be to it) makes but a slow progress and little advance in the world. And the reason of it is not hard to be found in men's necessities, passions, vices and mistaken interests, which turn their thoughts another way; and the designing leaders as well as following herd find it not to their purpose to employ much of their meditations this way. Human reason unassisted failed men in its great and proper business of morality. It never from unquestionable principles made out an entire body of the "law of nature."' We can only conjecture what the science would have been. God and His attributes are known to us by demonstration, and ourselves by direct intuition, and, as the sentence just quoted indicates, Locke would probably, as Sidgwick suggests, have demonstrated from man's nature the body of laws which under

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the name of laws of nature he inherited from Grotius and Puffendorf. It is certain that in Locke's view the value of moral laws is not derived from the pleasure and pain they bring by way of sanction. He does not even allow with Bentham and his school, the so-called Hedonists, that human action is determined by the prospect of pleasure or pain. On the contrary, he maintains that it is determined by present 'uneasiness' or desire. Though we all do desire happiness and in the end good is what is productive of pleasure, the laws of morality are not based upon a utilitarian foundation but follow from the nature of man and his relation to God.

But the same unsolved problem which met us in his treatment of mathematics, how mathematical laws can be valid of sensible facts, confronts us again in a corresponding form in Ethics. How can propositions, which follow from abstract human nature, be applicable to or true of a world of concrete men? Moral judgments vary from country to country and from age to age. This was one of Locke's reasons, and a correct one, for denying the innateness of moral principles. But it does not seem to have disturbed his belief in the abstract character of moral laws. Yet it implies either that these varying and conflicting

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judgments are not moral or else that morality is not abstract. The greater the difficulty there is in arriving at an abstract conception of human nature or of what God intended man to be, the more it seems we must turn for a basis of moral judgment to considering the actual passions and circumstances of mankind.

The only other memorable chapter which Locke writes on Ethics, or rather the psychology of Ethics, is the extremely perplexed and perplexing discussion of the freedom of the will—which he modified considerably in his life-time, and professed himself dissatisfied with to the end. Locke denies that we can speak intelligibly of freedom of the will, since the will is one power and freedom is another. It is the whole man who is free. We are free so far as we can act or forbear action; yet we are not free to act otherwise than we do; to maintain that we are would be to declare that a man is not pleased to do what he is pleased to do. Yet just when Locke appears to be committing himself to determinism, he declares that true freedom is found in the power we have of suspending judgment before action, and consequently the right improvement of our liberty consists in right consideration, in the government of the passions, in the constant

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determination of 'prosecuting true felicity,' and 'suspending this prosecution in particular cases, till they have looked before them, and informed themselves whether that particular thing which is then proposed or desired lie in the way to their main end, and make a real part of that which is their greatest good.'

CHAPTER V

POLITICS

‘THE power of the civil law,’ Locke says in the *Essay*, ‘is the force of the commonwealth engaged to protect the lives, liberties and possessions of those who live according to its laws, and has power to take away life, liberty or goods from him who disobeys.’ He uses precisely identical terms in defining political power in the second and more famous of the two *Treatises of Government* which were published in 1690, in the same year as the *Essay*. Half of what he wrote or designed appears to have been lost, but Locke hopes that the papers which remain ‘are sufficient to establish the throne of our great Restorer, our present King William, and make good his title in the consent of the people; which, being the only one of all lawful governments, he has more fully and clearly than any prince in Christendom; and to justify to the world the people of England, whose love of their just and natural rights, with their resolution to’ preserve them, saved the nation

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when it was on the very brink of slavery and ruin.' The first treatise is a destructive criticism of Filmer's *Patriarcha*, a work designed to establish the claims of absolute monarchy as inherited from Adam. Filmer appears to have been so far historical in his method as the Pentateuch, which he took for his authority, gives us a picture of patriarchal society, which at any rate was one form of government. But neither it nor Locke's criticism of it interests us here.

The second treatise explains the nature of civil society, by tracing its growth from the state of nature or primitive condition of man, conceived in the fashion in which it had come down from the Stoics and Roman lawyers, who identified it with the Age of Gold. It is a state of peace, and is governed, if the term may be allowed, by the law of nature supposed to be given to men by the 'light of nature.' According to this law men are free to dispose of themselves and their possessions as they think fit; they are equal, and bound in virtue of their equality to mutual benevolence. Their liberty is no licence; reason teaches men that no one has a right to harm another in his health, liberty or possessions. But as he is bound to preserve himself, so he is to preserve them. In the state of nature every man

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has a right to punish a transgressor, requiting him as reason and conscience dictate. Two doctrines are of special interest and importance. The right of property belongs to any man, in so far as he takes any part of the common possession, and mixes his labour with it—a doctrine fruitful of consequences in subsequent thought. The rights and duty of the parent arise from the weakness of the children, and the necessity of rearing them through infancy; and Locke thinks that the institution of marriage depends on that of the family: it is the fact that a second child may be born before the first is independent of its parents that leads to permanent marriage.

From the inconveniences of this state of nature civil society arises. For there is no settled law allowed by common consent; the law of nature is indeed plain, but men are biassed by their interest; there is no 'indifferent' judge and no sufficient power of enforcement. Men therefore by consent divest themselves of their natural liberty by uniting into a community 'for their comfortable, safe and peaceable living in a secure enjoyment of their properties'; the united body acting through the will of the majority. This is the institution of commonwealth in a contract of citizens with one another. The first result of this

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compact—‘the first and fundamental positive law’—is the establishing of the legislative power, the supreme power to which government is delegated in trust. But the law of nature is not abandoned by the individual’s surrender of his liberties to the state, but on the contrary, ‘its obligations are only in many cases drawn closer, and have by human laws known penalties annexed to them, to enforce their observation.’ The legislative power receives therefore no arbitrary authority, but it is limited by the public good of the society. An executive is established for permanent enforcement of the law, but may be removed by the legislative. The prince or monarch holds his commission therefore as a trust conferred on him by the law; his prerogative is but ‘the power left in his hands to provide for the public good, in such cases which, depending on unforeseen and uncertain occurrences, certain and unalterable laws could not safely direct.’ When the prince abuses or neglects his trust, or when the legislature abuses its trust, the government is dissolved, and the people can provide for themselves by establishing a new one.

Locke’s conception of civil society and government is thus completely foreign to that of a theocracy, and is directed against such a concep-

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tion. He maintained that civil society and the church have entirely different concerns. 'The power of civil government relates only to man's civil interests.' But 'a church I take to be a voluntary society of men joining themselves together, of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him and effectual to the salvation of their souls.' The whole doctrine of the *Letter Concerning Toleration*, from which these words are taken, follows from this. The magistrate, as such, has no concern with religion; he cannot interfere with worship and belief. He can only do so legitimately in so far as religious worship or doctrine brings the members of a church into conflict with the good of the civil society. And it is only so far as this is the case—so far, that is, as they may be influenced in their civil relations by obedience to an external authority—that Locke denies toleration to Roman Catholics; and only because to disbelieve in God renders a man unfit for civil life that he excludes Atheists from the benefit of the toleration which he would extend to Mahomedans.

The effort of Locke's political doctrine (and hence its historical, as distinguished from its philosophical, importance) was to 'establish William's

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throne on the consent of the people.' The effort of Hobbes's doctrine of the State in the *Leviathan* was to justify the divine right of the Stuarts. With Hobbes the state of nature is one of warfare from which the law of nature or reason bids man depart in order to self-preservation, handing over their rights to a man or body of men, the sovereign. The sovereign, with Hobbes, bears the rights of all the members of the society, is the 'person' of the commonwealth, and is therefore distinct altogether from Locke's monarch, or prince, whose capacity is only fiduciary. With Locke, on the other hand, the state of nature is not left behind, but the law of nature which regulated it is continued into civil society and enforces the ideal conditions of the state of nature. Both writers employ the fiction of a social contract, arising out of the supposed state of nature after experience of its inconveniences. Locke pleads that the state of nature may actually still be traced in the relations of princes, and even in certain peoples who act by popular consent. But he says, in answer to those who doubt the genesis of commonwealth from a state of nature, that naturally enough the state of nature eludes our historical search, for 'government is everywhere anterior to records,' and early peoples are actually

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found already under paternal government, the head or father of the group being chosen as the fittest to govern. In truth, the picture of the origin of society from a state of nature by an original compact only illustrates the natural tendency to account for society by analysing it into its fundamental elements and then making the historical assumptions that these elements existed before the society itself was created. According as the imagination of the writer was more impressed by the Yahoo or the Houyhnhnm in human nature, he described the state of nature as one of war or of benevolence. In Locke this tendency is parallel to that which led him in his philosophy partially to confuse the analysis of complex ideas into their simple elements with the historical statement or fiction that simple ideas precede, and are combined by the mind into, complex ideas.

The fiction of the original compact by consent of the people (a fiction almost unavoidable if abstract theories must be clothed in the language of concrete life) really did attach the belief of Locke, as it did that of Hobbes and of the writers, to whom Locke owes most for his political speculation, of whom Hooker was the chief. It was shared by the later writer, Rousseau, whom he

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anticipated. In an important respect Locke fell short of Rousseau; he did not reach that writer's conception of the 'general will' as the sovereign, but contented himself with the consent of the people acting by the majority, by what Rousseau called the 'will of all.' He missed the organic or personal feature in civil society. In this respect Hobbes's conception of the sovereign as the 'person' or bearer of the rights of the commonwealth is superior to Locke's. Only once does he approach this conception, when he points to the natural or 'federative' power of a commonwealth, whereby (as in war) it acts as one body against an external nation. The body politic is, for Locke, an aggregate of consenting individuals; just as in metaphysics the knowledge, which is the common property of all, appears to be the propositions which all happen to make identically. And as in his metaphysics this defect was concealed by his assumption of a world of real existences, which was there for every one to acquire knowledge of through ideas, it was concealed in his political theory by the persistence of the supposed objective and universal 'laws of nature,' from the state of nature into civil society.

Locke's doctrine of civil government may be said to have represented the better spirit of the

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Revolution. But neither that doctrine nor the doctrine of toleration was received with universal or immediate acceptance in England. But they set up the ideal of thinking in matters of civil and religious liberty for the next century. Toleration was introduced in England not at once, nor in the form which Locke demanded as the non-interference of the state in religion, but in the form of indulgence, of removal (and a qualified one) of the restrictions on dissenters as compared with the favoured church. The speculative foundations of Locke's political doctrine have given way or have needed repair. But its political influence was great, and due allowance being made for its speculative defects, it represents not only the ideals of the finer minds of 1688, but in substance the common-sense of our political constitution as we have come to understand it. It exercised a most powerful influence through its effect upon Montesquieu. When the terms of the fundamental declaration of American independence were borrowed as they were from Locke's political treatise, Locke rendered a greater service to political liberty than when he drafted or helped to draft the constitutions of Carolina, which appear to have been inoperative.

CHAPTER VI ‘

RELIGION

THE concluding chapters of the *Essay* set forth the boundaries between faith and reason. Assent in Locke's sense varies in its degrees according to the grounds of probability and it is always less than knowledge. But there is ‘one sort of propositions which challenges the highest degree of assurance, whether or not the thing proposed agrees or disagrees with common experience and the ordinary course of things.’ These are the truths of revelation, the assurance of which is faith. While reason is the ‘discovery of the certainty or probability of propositions by observation from ideas got by sensation or reflection,’ faith is ‘the assent to any proposition not thus made out, but upon the credit of the proposer as coming from God in some extraordinary manner.’ Revelation can indeed give us no new simple ideas which we had not before by sensation or reflection; and though it may make us know propositions already known through reason it

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cannot be admitted against the clear evidence of reason. If this is true of direct revelation, still less can revealed truths be accepted merely on the authority of tradition, or of a book, unless reason convinces us that the book itself is inspired. But there are subjects which, not being contrary to reason, are above reason, and these if revealed are matters of faith to which we can give a full assurance, provided always that reason judges whether the revelation is such, and what the words mean in which it is contained. It follows that even when we can judge by our natural powers, 'an evident revelation should determine our assent even, against probability.' In the case of miracles when properly attested their very strangeness makes them fitted to produce belief, when, Locke adds in significant words, 'they are suitable to ends aimed at by Him who has power to change the course of nature.'

This definition of the separate powers of faith and reason, according to which faith 'cannot be afforded to anything but upon good reason' and so cannot be opposite to it, and at the same time is described as an 'assent founded on the highest reason,' makes Locke at once a believer and a rationalist. All that he does in the *Essay* to elucidate his doctrine is to protest against what

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he calls enthusiasm, what we should call fanaticism, upon which he added a chapter in the fourth edition, which admirably illustrates both his breadth and his cautious restraint. 'Revelation' is natural reason enlarged,' but enthusiasm, which persuades itself of immediate intercourse with God, without help of reason, but 'from the conceits of a warmed or overweening brain,' pretending to an internal light, sins against the supreme arbitration of reason. It takes away reason to make way for revelation and puts out the light of both. 'For God (he adds in a well-known phrase) when He makes the prophet doth not unmake the man.'

But the real meaning of Locke's blending of faith and rationalism and of the credence which he attaches to miracles, is only adequately seen when we take into account his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, a book which, besides many tedious pages, contains some of Locke's finest work. Locke determined, he tells us, to put aside all works of divinity and endeavour to discover the message of the New Testament itself as it presented itself to a candid and unbiassed reader. The plainness of the doctrine made him surprised that everybody did not see and embrace it. Though at his first setting out he was ignorant where his search

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would conduct him, he was impressed by the 'wonderful harmony leading to the same points in all the parts of the sacred history of the Gospels.' Two things, and only two things, he found, besides belief in one God, are taught by Jesus and by His apostles as the condition of the new covenant: faith and repentance—believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and through this faith adopting a good life. This replaced the Mosaic law of works and the morality of the heathen. All else contained in the Scriptures beyond these fundamental articles, though truths and to be believed by one who knows them, a man may still be ignorant of and yet be saved, or may interpret differently from other men according to his lights. That there is one God, that Jesus is the Messiah, and that we must live a good life, are enough. The essential reasonableness of Christianity consisted, to Locke, therefore, in its declaration of God's unity, no longer restricted to one people but delivered to all mankind, and its bringing to righteousness through this faith weak men who cannot by reason attain to rules of morality. 'Natural religion in its full extent nowhere had been taken care of by the force of natural reason' 'Nobody that I know before our Saviour's time ever did or went about to give us

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a morality . . . which mankind might have recourse to as their unerring rule. Such a law of morality Jesus Christ hath given us in the New Testament, but by the latter of these ways, by revelation.'

It is plain, therefore, from the spirit of this work (as well as from the little posthumous *Discourse on Miracles*) that for Locke not only the belief in Christian revelation but in the miracles by which it was supported depended on the evidence which the revelation supplies of the 'ends aimed at by God.' 'The miracles are to be judged by the doctrine, not the doctrine by the miracles.'¹ Their significance to him lies not so much in their contrariety to ordinary events, as in the light they threw upon the divine nature, which could use them to enforce a system of morality, thoroughly acceptable to the human reason. Locke's profound belief in the concern which God has for His universe which He creates, and his willingness to base our theoretical conviction of God's existence on a precarious use of the conception of causality, leave as many questions unsolved as they solve. But at least they do not blur the problem by omitting one portion of the data.

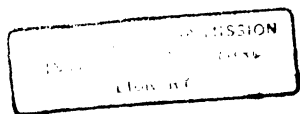
¹ From the *Journal*. See Fox Bourne, vol. i. p. 464 (quoted by Fraser).

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The rationalism of Locke made him the parent of Deism, which neglected the faith which he combined with his rationalism. In the controversy over the question whether natural or rational religion could be reconciled with Christianity as a revealed religion supported by miracles, the Deists were those who upheld natural religion and directly and indirectly, with irony more or less concealed, depreciated Christianity. The latitude practised by the orthodox writers made them not always or easily distinguishable from the Deists, one of whom indeed claimed Archbishop Tillotson as the source of Deism. It is not strange, therefore, that though Locke must be reckoned on the side of the orthodox, the Deists should have derived their inspiration from him. The circumstances have been related which brought Locke into conflict with Stillingfleet. Toland's argument to show that the Gospels contained nothing 'above reason' was based by him on Locke's *Essay* and repudiated by Locke. Collins who had been an ardent pupil of Locke wrote in his *Discourse of Free-thinking* one of the deistical books which excited the liveliest controversy. The deistical doctrine passed through various phases in England during the first half of the eighteenth century and then died out. But it left its traces in two minds of the first

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order. In England it led to Hume's *Essay on Miracles* and his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. Abroad it led to the deism of Voltaire, who left England in 1728 to become the missionary in Europe of the philosophy of Newton and Locke. Hume and Voltaire represent (not in religion only) the disintegrating and sceptical tendency, which was one, but only one element in Locke's philosophy. A new construction followed in the latter part of the century, first in Rousseau and then in Kant.



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